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INSIDE A DOCTOR'S WALLET • JAMES TOBIN VS. THE EDITORS ON SOCIAL SECURITY

MAY 5 1987

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

Gary Hart's Second Chance

The charm offensive
Fred Barnes

New, improved 'new ideas'
Morton Kondracke

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE WAGES OF SIN

To the editors:

Henry Fairlie contrasts what he sees as the televangelists' vulgar ostentation with the poverty of Mother Teresa, St. Francis, and Jesus ("Evangelists in Babylon," April 27) and says such showiness proves the evangelists have no religion at all. Well, Chartres Cathedral and York Minster may be more pleasing to the eye and spirit than Oral Roberts's prayer tower, but earthly lucre—and lots of it—built them all. Christians should be saddened that pettiness among the TV preachers has harmed ministries on which many believers rely, but it is historically inaccurate and not a little snobbish for Fairlie to condemn the evangelists' riches merely for the inelegance of their display.

RICHARD RILEY
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Contrary to Henry Fairlie's suggestion that televangelism is theology-neutral, relying only on personal faith, TV preachers like Jerry Falwell work out of a specific theological tradition that is more than a century and a half old: dispensational premillennialism. Falwell's theological influences are J. N. Darby (who started it all in 1830), C. I. Scofield (responsible for the dispensationalist Bible), and more recently: J. D. Pentecost, J. F. Walvoord, and even Hal Lindsey. The current theological center of the movement is Dallas Theological Seminary (of which Walvoord is president).

Fairlie seems to think the real story lies in the "greed" of the televangelists. But the point is not that they don't live like Mother Teresa. The point is that all their worldly gains are in the service of an idea system that—by confusing belief with knowledge, and then by assuming knowledge of the future—is fanatically anti-rational and anti-pluralist. The richer-than-thou analysis diverts us into fruitless debate.

JOE CUOMO
Flushing, New York

To the editors:

Where are your editors?

To assume that everyone uses four-letter words and no one will be offended seriously underestimates the caliber of your readers. Henry Fairlie is a fine writer and his "Evangelists in Babylon" is an interesting piece. But THE NEW REPUBLIC loses a great deal by using gutter words when there are other words that can tell the story as well.

ANN LANDERS
Chicago, Illinois

SWABBIE SOPHISTICATION

To the editors:

Mandatory military service, as suggested in the editorial "Where Did It All Go?" (April 20), will not give the United States a "strong public spirit of involvement in this country's defense." The "personal experience of soldiering" will not give the public expertise in military affairs. How many 18-year-olds will actually have an opinion on the feasibility of the Midgetman, Bradley, or Stealth? These teenagers, many of whom are apathetic about the military life, will rarely get a chance at military decision-making. Rather, they will be trained to do a few specific duties. Strategy and weapons development are left to expert officers and technicians. Surely all these 18-year-olds will not be experts and will not be imparted with any "public spirit of involvement" that is necessary to the military in a democracy.

NOAH FINKEL
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

TRADING BARBS

To the editors:

Between 1981 and 1986, 13.1 million workers lost their jobs, in large part due to unfair competition from abroad. TRB ("Talking Tough," April 13) asserts that protectionism doesn't save jobs, it costs jobs. Those Third World countries that are thriving would disagree; they are among the most protectionist. TRB claims that while the benefits of protectionism are identifiable, the costs are abstract. What about the abstract costs involved if skilled jobs that pay decent wages are lost? How are the new immigrants to the United States and the working poor to support their families and improve their standards of living? It was the factory workers earning decent wages who bought the goods they pro-

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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FROM WASHINGTON

FANTASY ISLAND

It took 16 years after the Russian Revolution for the United States to recognize the Soviet Union. Since then, through the Hitler-Stalin pact, the revelations about the gulags, the invasions of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan, we have maintained diplomatic relations with the Soviets. It was 23 years after Mao's revolution that President Nixon broke the ice with China, and 29 years afterward that we established diplomatic relations. Since then, our relationship with the world's largest totalitarian government has been cordial to the point of ardor most of the time. We even maintain diplomatic relations with Nicaragua, a country we are for all practical purposes at war with.

Meanwhile, 28 years after the Cuban revolution, we still refuse to recognize the Castro regime, and still attempt an economic embargo. At the moment, the Reagan administration has no one running the small "American interests" office opened by the Carter people in 1977.

Now may not be the most opportune moment to note this anomaly. Fidel just gave another round of interviews to American journalists, and made some witty jokes. But fewer people than ever are seduced by his charm. President Reagan is not one for Nixon-like surprise reversals. In the throes of an arms control deal with the Soviets, he doesn't need to make any more trouble for himself with his right flank.

In the past year, with characteristic perversity, Castro has bucked the Communist-world trend and snuffed a few tentative free-market economic experiments in his country. A true cultural revolutionary, he seems to have been sincerely offended by the sight of people finding happiness through bourgeois materialism (that is, making money). Also in the past year, Armando Valladares's memoir of 22 years in Cuban prisons, *Against All Hope* (Knopf), has shown the true totalitarian nature of Castro's regime to anyone who still needed convincing.

Furthermore, our thoughts about Cuba these days are wrapped up in our feelings about Nicaragua. Many see our unrequited initial friendliness toward Castro, his betrayed promises of democracy, and the subsequent consolidation of Communist rule as a lesson we should have learned, that conciliating Latin revolutionaries is futile.

So maybe now isn't the time. But will there ever be a convenient time to end this historical anomaly? There's no sense waiting for a clear sign from Fidel. It's a point of anti-imperialist pride not to give us one. "We are not impatient, nor . . . are we anxious for an improvement in relations," he told the *Washington Post* two years ago. "We do not advocate eternal hostility between Cuba and the United States," he told the *Post* last month, and that's about as encouraging as he's going to get. Waiting for Castro to die is nearly pointless, too. He's 60, built like a horse, and has even given up smoking.

The right question is not whether Castro fully intended to make Cuba a totalitarian society and Soviet puppet while he was still a rebel in the hills. Suppose he did. The question is what would have happened in the subsequent three decades if his giant neighbor to the north had drawn him into a web of diplomacy and trade, rather than attempting to ostracize him.

At what point do you admit that a policy has been a failure? Vernon Walters, our United Nations ambassador, writing recently in the *Wall Street Journal*, ridicules those who have urged a more accommodating approach. "When Mr. Castro celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Cuban liberation, Mr. Valladares was still in prison. Yet we were encouraged to be patient, to understand, . . . to coax him away from the Soviets and to ease him out of totalitarianism." And so on throughout the decades. But it has not been the coaxers and accommodationists making America's Cuba policy all this time. It is people with the opposite philosophy.

Judging from the Reagan administration's own propaganda, it's hard to see how a different approach to Cuba could possibly have turned out worse. According to Kenneth Skoug Jr., director of Cuban affairs in the State Department, Cuba is "one of the tightest dictatorships in the world," has gone from having "one of the highest living standards in Latin America" to being "one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere," yet maintains "the largest armed forces in Latin America" and "has been constantly engaged in the business of fomenting revolution for more than a quarter century." Let's just hope our Nicaragua policy is not this successful.

Diplomatic relations are not a sign of friendship or approval. They are a recognition of reality. Economic relations are also part of the normal intercourse of nations, not a reward for good behavior. There's nothing wrong with using trade as a political weapon—if it works. But the embargo against Cuba clearly hasn't worked. (The rest of the Organization of American States lifted sanctions in 1975.) The Soviets do have to spend $5 billion a year propping up the Cuban economy, which must be no fun. But anti-Cuba hard-liners try to have it both ways about whether Cuba's economic straits are the result of our embargo or the result of the inherent failures of Communist economics. Obviously we want credit for the macroeconomic catastrophe, but not blame for the immiseration of the people.

Supporters of the embargo underestimate the insidious power of capitalism. Could Castro have resisted the gringo dollars available from tourism and trade? Could a nation with thousands of American tourists coursing through it and a network of business relations with America have sustained its revolutionary ardor, preserved itself as a garrison state, just 90 miles away from the glittering Sunbelt? Seems unlikely.

This is no brief for the kind of fatuous love affair we have developed with China, in which we pretend that a Communist state isn't what it obviously is. The Reagan administration's one diplomatic initiative toward Cuba, in 1984, collapsed because of Castro's fury over the start-up of Radio Marti, a Voice of America service broadcasting—no doubt tendentiously—into Cuba. That's too bad, but the administration was correct not to be cowed. The war of words is one we should never be shy of fighting.

But our total snub of Castro has been self-defeating. How has the leader of a tiny nation become such a geostrategic force to be reckoned with and a hero to the Third World? How has he won the grudging admiration of even democratic leaders in Latin America? Partly through charisma and partly through ruthlessness, yet partly through the reflected glory of our own Yankee hostility. Whatever Castro may have been three decades ago, we've made him what he is today.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
MAY 18, 1987

RE-REGULATION RAG

After six years of laissez-faire rhetoric under the Reagan administration, regulation may be coming back into fashion. Everywhere there are hints that the public, Congress, and even the administration are ready for a bit more benign federal meddling in the private sector. Scandals on Wall Street are prompting proposals for new legislation to restrict corporate acquisitions. Passengers are grumbling about flight delays and safety lapses in air travel. Congress passed a stringent Clean Water Act over President Reagan's veto. And most recently, the conservative-dominated Federal Communications Commission got into the act, announcing new penalties for broadcasters that allow "obscene" references to "sexual and excretory acts" on the radio.

Just how welcome is this trend? If it means that the country has rejected the most simplistic anti-regulatory sentiments that came to Washington with Reagan, then it is welcome indeed. Though not strictly speaking a matter of safety, health, or economic regulation, the FCC's crackdown on dirty words does illustrate the intellectual foibles of get-government-off-our-backsism. "Shock Radio" clearly sells (that's one reason some find it so threatening). A lot of people like it. If it were any other hot innovation, the administration would try to remove regulatory obstacles, or maybe export it to Japan. The point is that even the most ardent free-marketers—such as the FCC itself during the Reagan years—can identify cases in which values ought to override the supposedly neutral decisions of the marketplace.

The reason is simple. Capitalism is a supremely efficient system for satisfying society's wants and needs. But in the process, the market has a way of generating offensive or harmful "externalities"—side effects such as unsafe working conditions, pollution, traffic jams, radioactivity. In these instances of "market failure," a large number of people have suffering imposed upon them, willy-nilly, but those who are responsible for creating the offending nastiness don't have to pay for it. The solution is to make the responsible parties pay the social costs—to "internalize the externalities."

If capitalism is going to be livable at all, the only real question is when and how government should intervene. Most of the resurgent pro-regulatory sentiment is prompted by concerns about health, safety, and environmental issues. These are the areas that have been the most neglected by Reagan. His administration assumed that the public wanted jobs more than clean air or water, and that people would therefore support cutting regulatory costs to corporations, even at the expense of a few additional cancer deaths a year. But most polls show that this is not the case. And that is all to the good. National government is the institution best able to protect the public from hazards in the environment, shoddy consumer products, and unsafe working conditions.

But if government is going to get back into the regulation business, it will have to make distinctions. The essential one is between regulation that protects public health or the environment, and regulation that establishes economic privileges for a few lucky companies. The push for tighter controls on corporate raiders is basically an

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example of the second kind. Mergers and acquisitions do generate a lot of income for paper-shuffling lawyers and investment bankers. But overall, the fear of takeovers acts as a spur to rouse corporate management structures out of their inefficiency, which enhances the vigor of the economy as a whole.

And this comes at a time when we've already gotten rid of the most egregious forms of economic regulation, by breaking up the phone monopoly, and deregulating trucking and air travel. On balance, these changes have been a boon to the American consumer, and demonstrate that there is a strong case to be made for deregulation on liberal grounds.

Take the airlines. The cost of tickets to fly has fallen by $6 billion per year each year since the 1978 deregulation (a Democratic project, by the way) freed air travel from the golden prison of government-administered fares and schedules. Now more Americans than ever before can get off the bus and onto the quickest and most convenient form of transportation—which used to be the more-or-less exclusive preserve of the well-to-do. If that isn't progressive, what is?

To be sure, this overwhelmingly positive result has been accompanied by new problems rooted in airlines' efforts to reduce costs and keep up with the cutthroat competition. The hassles caused by scrimping on safety and flight delays are maddening—and worse. But the solution is not a new effort to impose "order" on the market. In the long run, such arrangements would only succeed in restoring the privileges of a few carriers, and the added comfort would be enjoyed mainly by better-off passengers. If safety is a problem, the existing safety inspection and enforcement agency should be beefed up (Reagan cut it to the bone in his first term, and it is only slowly being rebuilt now), and the air traffic control system expanded and updated. As for flight delays, rather than imposing flat restrictions or quotas on takeoffs and landings, the govern-

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

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5.	ENTR'ACTE	*	22
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7.	SPECTATOR SPORTS	2	16
8.	NOISY SPRING	—	1
9.	COMING OF AGE	—	1
10.	GAMES PEOPLE PLAY	*	5

1. THE TORCHON IS PASSED

Competitiveness. Is the competitiveness campaign fading? Baker's widely quoted remarks about Japanese and German leadership, and the responsibilities that go with it, are quite a closing note for the Reaganites. In fact, the tariff debate sounds increasingly like a tantrum. A rising realization is that "Made in America" is rarely perceived as a sign of quality anywhere.

2. JUST AROUND THE CORNER

The economy. The hot word in economic discussions is "psychology." Confidence is reportedly plummeting, Depression-era photos are running, and Great Crash scenarios are common. Meanwhile, home buyers across the country are getting their fixed rates pulled out from under them, which does their psychology no good at all.

3. THE TRUE DROSS

Televangelism. Bakker had been weathering the Hahn affair; the fundamentalist culture assumes sin and forgives it. But new stories about alleged homosexual acts could sink him. These are abominations, and cast other misbehavior in an even more lurid light. Bakker's Fall threatens the televangelist establishment itself; Falwell's effort to hold PTL together is self-defense.

4. TWISTED-CROSS ROADS

Nazis. Despite the attention Demjanjuk, Linnas, Waldheim, and now the *Shoah* airing have given Nazism here, we remain distant onlookers. The real nightmare is recurring in Europe. Barbie has directed France's attention to its World War II collaborators, and guilt feelings are being traced through postwar generations by the German media.

5. ENTR'ACTE

Iranamok. Here come the hearings, remember? Immunity is being distributed liberally, and people are practically lining up to get their share. Security guards have been posted around North's home, supposedly to protect him from international terrorists seeking revenge. Washington whisperers suggest the hearings will be juicier than expected. Intermission's almost over.

6. ARMS TWISTING

Arms Control. There's still a debate over arms control, but it appears to be irrelevant. For example, are the tactical nukes enough? How about linkage with conventional force reduction? And what about Japan, which is left with a hundred missiles pointing at it? The answer is, the train has left the station, and these questions were left on the platform.

7. SPECTATOR SPORTS

AIDS. Fear of AIDS has made condoms respectable; it may be having the same effect on pornography. Polls indicate a new U.S. tolerance of porn, so long as it's hidden away; *Time* has noted the rise of non-lecherous, "feminist" porn videos; in Europe *Stern* has reported a general explosion in video porn. *Stern* argues that porn-watching is becoming a substitute for casual sex.

8. NOISY SPRING

The environment. Environmentalism is again showing signs of big-time revival. This is due partly to the Chernobyl anniversary, but also to a few hardy perennials: the troubling ozone and tropical forest situations, the controversy over patented life-forms and proposed coastal oil-drilling. Even the misadventures of the Jersey trash barge seem to be feeding the trend.

9. COMING OF AGE

The New Age. Last week's déjà vu anti-CIA protest notwithstanding, '60s-clones are not likely to be the next press hype. In place of Reaganite yuppies, look for holistic New Agers. Their dreamy music has become a major genre, their mystical outlook is again popular, and even industry is turning to New Agers for motivational training.

10. GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Ethics. Should it be disturbing that Situation Ethics has become a smash party game? "A Question of Scruples," built on responses to various "dilemmas," assumes that right and wrong are gray areas, and that confessing and defending self-centered moral choices are fun.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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ment should establish an auction system for airlines to buy and sell landing slots at peak hours. That way, only carriers that need the slots the most would actually get them, and there would be a minimum of bureaucratic tangle. The Reagan administration proposed an experiment of this sort last year, but characteristically wanted to let the airlines that already have valuable slots sell them off, rather than having the revenues accrue to the government.

Economic deregulation makes the world more confusing at first, but the benefits soon become clear, and usually outweigh the costs. Health and safety deregulation just makes the world a harsher place. There is a trade-off between economic flexibility and safety and health. But the Reagan administration has overvalued the former and undervalued the latter. Sensible deregulation and sensible re-regulation both require a government more attuned to these distinctions.

NOTEBOOK

□ THE INSCRUTABLE EAST:

Japan hints retaliation at U.S. tax on imports

—*Detroit Free Press*, April 19

Japan rules out trade retaliation

—*Detroit News*, same day

(thanks to Mark Wade, Garden City, Michigan)

□ HAMMER AND SYCOPHANTS, UPDATE: As reported in this space two weeks ago, the cover of *Hammer*, the new autobiography of Armand Hammer, the global megalomaniac and charlatan, was adorned with encomiums from 12 celebrities, ranging from Barbara Walters to George Bush to Menachem Begin. That, it turns out, is just the beginning. So many distinguished personages have taken the time from their busy schedules (supposedly) to read the 526-page book in advance of publication that Hammer's publisher, Putnam's, has put out a whole pamphlet to contain their praise. Additional worshipers at the shrine include Bob Hope, Shimon Peres, Dear Abby ("pure pleasure"), Ann Landers ("reads like a novel" [sic]), Art Linkletter, Norman Vincent Peale, Margaret Thatcher, Gregory Peck ("completely absorbing"), Jonas Salk, Albert Gore Jr., Louis Nizer ("savor it again and again"), Richard Nixon, Yitzhak Shamir, Bruno Kreisky, Charlton Heston, Robert Schuller, Irving Stone, J. Carter Brown, Alexander Haig, James Roosevelt, Teddy Kollek, Mstislav Rostropovich, Ted Turner, Isaac Stern ("superb artistry"), and a couple of celebrities we'd never heard of.

□ PULITZER PRIZE: TNR senior editor Charles Krauthammer has won the Pulitzer Prize for commentary—not, unfortunately, for his fine contributions to these pages (they don't give Pulitzers for magazine writing), but for his newspaper column, syndicated by the Washington Post Writers Group. Nevertheless, we take familial pride in this well-deserved recognition of a talent that TNR first discovered and cultivated. Charles, a psychiatrist by professional training, has been writing for TNR since 1980 and joined the staff in 1981.

□ GO FIGURE:

"President Reagan and his wife, Nancy, paid $92,460 in federal income taxes for last year, 27.5 percent of their adjusted gross income of $336,640. . . ."

—*Washington Post*, April 15

". . . the Reagans' total tax bill was $123,517. That was more than 36 percent of their total income of $336,640. . . ."

—*New York Times*, same day

(thanks to William H. Allen, Arlington, Virginia)

□ GORBO'S GAFFE: What if P. W. Botha of South Africa had said that America should solve its racial problems by setting up autonomous homelands for blacks and other minorities? What if Margaret Thatcher had said it? Is it likely that Representative Mickey Leland, a black progressive from Texas, would content himself with the observation that the speaker was "rather uninformed" and the remark "somewhat offensive"? In fact, the speaker was Mikhail Gorbachev, addressing a group of U.S. House members in Moscow in mid-April. Where are the outraged demands for an apology? Where are the threats of retaliation? Leland is actually correct that Gorbachev's remark reveals ignorance rather than malice, but that nice distinction doesn't usually stop the gaffe machine from generating an unholy fuss. Why has Gorbo gotten off so easy?

□ CORRECTION: The sentence in Robert Kuttner's piece "The Patrimony Society" (TNR, May 11, page 20) citing Frank Levy and Richard Michel's comparison of real wages for 25- to 34-year-old men in 1973 and in 1984 should have referred to men who had one to three years of *high school*, not one to three years of college.

What did they say,
and when did they say it?

IRAN-CONTRA QUIZ

CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS on the Iran-*contra* affair have begun. The following quiz will test your knowledge of the scandal so far.

1. Which magazine featured a September 1986 cover story entitled "What Managers Can Learn From Manager Reagan"? a) *Regardie's*; b) *National Lampoon*; c) *Fortune*; d) *Forbes*.

2. Complete Senator David Durenberger's quote: "I bet

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you it will be a cold day in _____ before any more money goes into Nicaragua. a) August; b) Hell; c) Death Valley; d) Washington.

3. True or false? When President Reagan called Oliver North after firing him, he told him that the revelations of recent days would make a great movie.

4. When asked if it wasn't hypocritical to ask other nations not to send arms to Iran when we were sending them ourselves, he replied, "Hypocrisy is a question of degree." Who is he? a) Donald Regan; b) George Shultz; c) Larry Speakes; d) Ed Meese.

5. During an appearance on "Nightline," what metaphor did John Ehrlichman use in advising President Reagan to fire some of his National Security Council staff? a) "He's got to prick the boil and take the heat." b) "Give 'em an hors d'oeuvre and maybe they won't come back for the main course." c) "Get rid of the bad fruit before it really starts to stink." d) "He's got to throw some of those babies out of the sleigh."

Who did what?

6. George Bush	a) Gushed about his "respect, affection, and admiration" for Oliver North and pledged to contribute to his defense fund.
7. Rep. Tom Lantos	b) Said that the Iranians "really are rug merchants."
8. David Broder	c) Complained that Republicans are deserting President Reagan and are headed "for the tall grass."
9. Donald Regan	d) Said he's "catching the Dickens from friends" on Iran.
10. Patrick Buchanan	e) Explained that the difference between Iranian radicals and moderates is "semantic."
11. Robert McFarlane	f) Compared the president to a large animal walking down the street mindlessly dropping turds for others to clean up.
12. Marlin Fitzwater	g) Scolded those "juveniles" who had the bad taste to delight in the president's misfortune.
13. Sam Donaldson	h) Called Nancy Reagan a "smiling mamba."

14. Three of these statements were uttered by President Reagan. Which one was not? a) "Mistakes were made"; b) "Serious mistakes were made"; c) "It was a mistake"; d) "I made a mistake."

15. In November 1986 President Reagan suffered the sharpest one-month drop in popularity ever recorded by a public opinion poll measuring presidential job performance. How many points did he lose? a) 14; b) 17; c) 21; d) 31.

16. Where did the first story about the Iran arms deal appear in print? a) the *New York Times*; b) a column by Jack Anderson and Dale Van Atta; c) the *Lowell Sun*; d) *Ash Shiraa*.

17. Which of these people is not yet on public record as believing that President Reagan knew about the diversion of funds to the *contras*? a) John Poindexter; b) Stephen Solarz; c) Ernest Hollings; d) Neil Reagan.

18. What did President Reagan say when asked if he was watching the House Foreign Affairs Committee hearings? a) "Are you kidding? And miss Big Bird and the Cookie Monster?" b) "Oh, now and then when I can't find a ball game." c) "Do I *look* like an idiot?" d) "The simple truth is, I don't remember—period. Everybody that can remember what they were doing this morning, raise your hand. I think it's possible to forget."

19. Three of these statements were uttered by Donald Regan. Which one came from the mouth of Ronald Reagan? a) "I don't see that it has been a fiasco or a great failure of any kind"; b) "Does the bank president know whether a teller in the bank is fiddling around with the books? No"; c) "Let's not forget whose idea this was. It was Bud's idea. When you give lousy advice, you get lousy results"; d) "How much more experience do you have to have in foreign policy than I do to believe you are qualified?"

20. From whom did Barbara Walters secretly pass on a message to President Reagan? a) Adnan Khashoggi; b) Manucher Ghorbanifar; c) Albert Hakim; d) Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Who said what?

21. Oliver North	a) "If Colonel North ripped off the Ayatollah and took $30 million and gave it to the *contras*, then God bless Colonel North!"
22. Ronald Reagan	b) "I have never seen Ronald Reagan more energetic, more fully engaged, and more in command. . . . He has never been better."
23. Nancy Reagan	c) "People have died face down in the mud all over the world defending those individual rights."
24. Patrick Buchanan	d) "I don't think most people associate me with leeches or how to get them off. But I know how to get them off. I'm an expert at it."
25. Robert McFarlane	e) "Simply put, there was a cake on the mission. I didn't buy it, bake it, cook it, eat it, present it, or otherwise get involved with it."
26. Howard Baker	f) "There is bitter bile in my throat these days."

27. Who is Landon Parvin? a) Richard Secord's lawyer;

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b) the novelist who called President Reagan's comparison of the *contras* to the Founding Fathers "an explosion of such incredible ignorance that . . . he is not fit for public office of any kind"; c) the speechwriter brought in by Nancy Reagan for the president's "This happened on my watch" speech; d) the maintenance man who was called in to fix Oliver North's overstuffed shredder.

28. Following President Reagan's March 4 speech, who said, "Good job, old friend"? a) Robert Dole; b) Paul Laxalt; c) Charles Z. Wick; d) Michael Deaver.

29. Complete Senator Alan Simpson's attack on the press for daring to ask President Reagan questions about the Iran-*contra* scandal: "You're not asking him things so you can get answers. You're asking him things because you know he's off-balance and you'd like to stick it in his _____." a) wazoo; b) bazoo; c) gazoo; d) kazoo.

30. Who is Heather Watson? a) The congressional aide who predicted that Elliott Abrams would lose his job as a result of coming revelations of his involvement with the *contras*; b) the assistant to fund-raiser Carl R. (Spitz) Channell who revealed that Channell referred to two of his most generous donors as "Dog Face" and "Ham Hocks"; c) the sixth-grade student who asked President Reagan an innocent question that he mistakenly interpreted as being about the Iran arms deal; d) the friend who told Fawn Hall about Andy Warhol's quote about fame.

31. What do John Tower, Paul Laxalt, Drew Lewis, and Stuart Spencer have in common? a) They all urged President Reagan to defend Shultz and Weinberger in a radio speech; b) They were all present at a White House meeting where President Reagan repeatedly responded to discussions of catastrophic health insurance by talking about a welfare family being put up in a plush New York hotel; c) They were all present at a party where President Reagan wore a tie that played "Jingle Bells"; d) They all turned down job offers from the White House.

32. True or false? Donald Regan found out that he was being replaced by Howard Baker when Frank Carlucci came into his office and said he'd just heard it on CNN.

33. Whose repeated claims of ignorance drew laughter from members of a congressional committee? a) Ed Meese; b) William Casey; c) Robert Gates; d) William Webster.

34. What happened during White House counsel David Abshire's first attempt to debrief President Reagan on what he knew about the Iran-*contra* affair? a) The president pretended that he had laryngitis; b) The president complained that he doesn't "have many fans anymore"; c) The president said he was "royally P.O.'d" about what had happened, but added that he was "saving the best stuff for the last act"; d) The president told him stories about Hollywood.

35. "We do not regard him as a mental case. But we regard him as a president who didn't do his job." Who said it? a) John Tower; b) Lawrence Walsh; c) Edmund Muskie; d) Brent Scowcroft.

36. Which of these events reportedly occurred in 1986? a) Nancy Reagan said, "Have your damned news conference!" and hung up on Donald Regan; b) Howard Baker said that when Nancy "gets her hackles up, she can be a dragon"; c) President Reagan told Nancy, "Get off my goddamn back!" d) President Reagan mentioned his mother in a speech.

37. True or false? President Reagan explained his repeated lying about Israel's role in the Iran arms deal at his November 19 news conference as "just a misstatement that I didn't realize I had made."

38. In the Tower Commission report, the phrase "personal management style" is a euphemism for which of President Reagan's character traits? a) Geniality and affability; b) Wit and wisdom; c) Smiling and waving; d) Ignorance and sloth.

39. What did President Reagan denounce as "despicable fiction"? a) John Chancellor's commentary that the slogan for the '80s is "I want mine and I want it now"; b) Sidney Blumenthal's declaration that "our long national daydream is over"; c) Murray Kempton's observation that the president "kept his basic campaign promise: he told us he would weaken government and he has brought it triumphantly near prostration"; d) William Safire's column claiming that the president "is being weakened and made to appear wimpish" by Nancy's meddling in government affairs.

40. How long was the memorandum that President Reagan didn't bother to read before authorizing the shipment of arms to Iran? a) 26 pages; b) 15 pages; c) 4 pages; d) 2½ pages.

PAUL SLANSKY

Paul Slansky is entering upon his seventh month of glee.

Answers

1) c; 2) d; 3) True; 4) a; 5) d; 6) d; 7) a; 8) g; 9) f; 10) c; 11) b; 12) e; 13) h; 14) d; 15) c; 16) b; 17) a; 18) b; 19) a; 20) b; 21) c; 22) f; 23) d; 24) a; 25) e; 26) b; 27) c; 28) b; 29) c; 30) c; 31) d; 32) True; 33) b; 34) d; 35) c; 36) c; 37) True; 38) d; 39) d; 40) d.

Silicon Valley goes to Washington.

SEMI-TOUGH

IN LITTLE OVER a year Silicon Valley has gone from being the hotbed of American entrepreneurialism to a federal charity case. Last summer American semiconductor companies pleaded for and got steep tariffs against imports of Japanese computer chips. This spring they were behind the administration's retaliation against Japanese electronics firms. The Senate voted unanimously to recommend sanctions. There was virtually no discussion about why it was worth starting a trade war over semiconductors, and no one questioned the chip lobby's assertion that wafers of

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silicon were critical to America's economic future. In fact most of the casually accepted "truths" about the chip wars are either highly debatable or not true at all. Consider three of the biggest myths:

Myth No. 1: Japan is taking over the U.S. industry. The Save-the-Semiconductor crowd claims that Japan has doubled its share of world semiconductor trade in the last five years, gained a world lead in chips over the United States, and acquired an overwhelming share of the American market for commodity memory chips. Last summer, when Washington forced a chip trade agreement on Japan, we were told that it was the result of unfair Japanese trade practices. We were told the same thing again this spring when Japanese "cheating" on that cartel deal prompted Reagan to impose a tariff on $300 million worth of Japanese goods.

What we weren't told is that the so-called Japanese chip invasion—though strong in certain places—actually amounts to no more than about 15 percent of the total U.S. market for semiconductors. And even that figure is misleading, since it's based on statistics that don't include the production of the huge American electronics firms that make chips in-house for their own products. When you include IBM and AT&T—among others—the U.S. world market share increases from 44 percent to about 57 percent.

Japan only leads the United States in the production of the most basic kind of memory chips, DRAMS—and that lead is virtually meaningless. Heavy production of DRAMS was once thought to be critical to manufacturing advancing technologies. Not anymore. The only thing notable about the DRAM these days is that too many people make them and not enough people want to buy them. DRAMS are everywhere. "You can buy them for a dollar in grocery stores," says one Silicon Valley chip maker. "They litter the landscape." In fact, there's a growing consensus that the Japanese may have made a huge blunder in concentrating so heavily on DRAM production. In the first half of 1986, the five biggest commodity-chip makers in Japan—Hitachi, Toshiba, Mitsubishi, NEC, and Fujitsu—saw their profits fall between 50 and 80 percent. "It's a painful time for all of us," a top official at Hitachi admitted. American firms have a big lead in the next generation of semiconductors, and in the meantime the Koreans may well take over the market for basic, high-volume memory chips.

THE CALL FOR protection against Japanese "dumping" comes from a handful of medium-sized Silicon Valley companies that were stupid enough to try to compete with huge, diversified Japanese companies in the low-profit, high-volume commodity-chip market. America has a big lead over Japan in cutting-edge chip technology. The firms behind the chip war are the ones that stuck with the doomed DRAM. National Semiconductor in San Jose spent years shrinking the design for its 64K DRAM before it realized that the chip's features were too small and sensitive for mass production. The firm's boss, Charlie Sporck, is one of the most outspoken critics of the peril posed by the Japanese computer invasion, but the only reason his firm makes any money is that it resells Hitachi mainframe computers. Sporck and his ilk, says one Silicon Valley analyst, "completely missed the boom in consumer electronics, miscalculated the demand for chips in the computer industry, and now they're missing the expanding markets for telecommunications, and optical and image processing applications."

Myth No. 2: The semiconductor industry needs a Japanese-style industrial policy in order to survive. America's commodity-chip makers won't stop at a trade war to get what they want. In March the Semiconductor Industry Association asked the Pentagon for a billion dollars over the next few years to fund a special manufacturing consortium known as Sematech.

The details of the plan are still sketchy. So far all that the semiconductor industry has agreed upon is to ask for defense money to test new manufacturing processes. Sematech's philosophical direction, however, is clear. "We want to regain our manufacturing capability: low cost, high volume, high reliability," says Ralph Thompson of the American Electronics Association. Sematech's backers draw one lesson from the "crisis" of Silicon Valley. The time of the lone entrepreneur in Silicon Valley has passed. Now high tech needs *dirigisme*.

DOES IT REALLY? An explosion in chip-design innovation is imminent. New automated computer tools will slash the amount of time and resources needed to come up with cutting-edge chip design. A three-man team at Digital Equipment in Massachusetts just came up with a 37,000 transistor integrated circuit—in just seven months. Using conventional technology, that process would have taken four times as long. More importantly, there are only about two or three thousand experienced integrated circuit designers in the world right now. With the new automated design equipment, that figure could increase by a factor of ten. In other words, just when the Pentagon and its client sector of the industry are about to create a Sematech dinosaur, the chip-design business is about to be opened up to tens of thousands of new people. The era of Silicon Valley entrepreneurship isn't over, it's just beginning.

The world's most profitable semiconductor firms right now are small Silicon Valley start-ups that have sworn off high-volume commodity-chip production and focused on producing limited numbers of sophisticated, custom-made chips. The trend is toward smaller and smaller chips with more and more room to store information on each one. Thus chip manufacture is shrinking in economic importance while the value of chip design is increasing exponentially. "What's happening in the semiconductor industry," says Carver Mead, the Caltech scientist who practically invented modern chip design, "is really nothing more than what happens in any leading-edge technology. Things move on. The things that add value, that people get paid for, become different with time."

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Myth No. 3: A healthy domestic semiconductor industry is a strategic necessity. This is the semiconductor industry's trump card. It came up repeatedly during Fujitsu's attempted takeover of Fairchild Semiconductor earlier this year, but it has its roots in a Pentagon report that came out in January. "Semiconductors truly are 'the industrial rice' of the information age," the report claimed. It recommended subsidizing domestic DRAM production, since "U.S. defense will soon depend on foreign sources for state-of-the-art technology in semiconductors."

But DRAMS aren't state-of-the-art technology. Even if they were, in a crisis the Pentagon could get all the memory chips it wanted from IBM and AT&T. Beyond that, it's not clear how Japanese participation in American high-tech production threatens national security. Texas Instruments designs its chips in America and manufactures them in Japan. Motorola just signed a highly favorable agreement with Toshiba that exchanges American microprocessor technology for Japanese manufacturing expertise. Before Fujitsu was scared away by the Commerce Department, it was planning to pour about $400 million in two years into Silicon Valley's Fairchild Semiconductor, which would have saved a firm on the brink of failure.

WHY SO MUCH concern over DRAMS? This supposedly objective task force was made up of defense contractors and semiconductor companies. Among the experts who provided testimony was Timothy Stone, head of the technology and industrial competitiveness division of the CIA's Office of Global Issues, who told the task force that "the consequences of losing a strong indigenous technology base in this industry could have . . . widespread effects on this country's ability to maintain technical superiority in advanced weapons systems over the U.S.S.R." Then Stone left the CIA to become a strategic planner for Motorola, which got forced out of DRAM production by the Japanese and desperately wants to get back in.

The best thing the Pentagon could do for the semiconductor industry is leave it alone. Already the Defense Department's export restrictions, designed to keep high technology out of the Soviets' hands, allow Japanese firms to capture foreign markets that otherwise would be American. If the Pentagon decides to fund Sematech, it will be to "satisf[y] certain DOD needs." But that doesn't necessarily help the industry, either. The chips the military wants have few commercial applications, and can only divert resources from the task of remaining competitive in international markets.

But then, competitiveness isn't really what the chip war is about. Semiconductor firms went to the Pentagon for help, says industry spokesman Daryl Hatano, because "that's where the money is."

Welcome to the new Silicon Valley.

MALCOLM GLADWELL

Malcolm Gladwell is a writer for *Insight* magazine.

Financial confessions of a sawbones.

IN A DOCTOR'S WALLET

YOU MAY BE feeling under the weather, but we doctors are doing fine. Doctors collected $91 billion in 1986—over two percent of the gross national product. The real problem, though, lies in the kind of medical care these megabucks buy. Doctors, long accustomed to providing too much of the wrong kind of medical care, now have powerful new incentives to withhold the right kind.

George Bernard Shaw put his finger on the problem in his preface to *The Doctor's Dilemma* 80 years ago. "That any sane nation, having observed that you could provide for the supply of bread by giving bakers a pecuniary interest in baking for you, should go on to give a surgeon a pecuniary interest in cutting off your leg," he wrote, "is enough to make one despair of political humanity."

This traditional payment system is called "fee for service." In 1766 New Jersey doctors formed a medical society for the purpose of setting common fees. They agreed not to charge for a home visit, but set high fees for bleeding patients and administering purging enemas. The home visit was a foot in the door, a loss leader, that opened the way for the physician to prescribe more exotic services that he could perform. The time the physician spent on medical histories, physical examinations, and patient counseling was little valued then, as now.

I recently cared for a young woman who came to see me because of an abnormal area on her breast. I referred her to a surgeon who performed a biopsy that showed the suspicious area to be an unusual form of breast cancer. Over the next three weeks I spent an hour on the phone with the patient discussing treatment options, the abilities of the general surgeon and the recommended plastic surgeon who would perform the breast reconstruction, the opinions of other physicians that she knew, and her emotional reaction to the sudden news that she would have to lose a breast. I spent another hour in the library, satisfying myself and my patient that the proposed surgical approach for this rarely encountered tumor was correct. Adding in the phone conversations with the surgeons, I spent three hours doing my part of her medical care. My total compensation was the fee for a single office visit, $38. I receive the same amount every time I interpret an electrocardiogram, an activity that takes as long as a minute only if I spill coffee on the EKG tracing.

Heart surgeons charge over $5,000 for performing coronary artery bypass surgery, but receive little for using their knowledge and experience to recommend medical treatment instead of surgery. In accordance with Shaw's dictum, experts agree that many of the more than 100,000 bypass operations performed in this country each year are unnecessary.

The financial reality of medical practice is that substantial profits on marginally useful or even unnecessary

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procedures subsidize the truly useful but non-income-producing activities. For physicians, the bottom line is usually more than adequate. But patients are badly served by a payment system that encourages too many tests and procedures and not enough brain work. Doctors do not intentionally set out to devote their efforts to less useful activities. But no matter how conscientious the physician, there is an inevitable tendency to cut non-reimbursable corners.

THE GOOD NEWS is that this fee-for-service system is under attack. The bad news is the payment system devised by some health maintenance organizations to replace fee for service may be worse. An HMO is an organization that provides medical services to enrollees for a monthly prepaid amount. The enrollees have little or no out-of-pocket expenses when they seek medical care. In exchange, patients give up the right to freedom of choice of doctor or hospital.

The oldest HMOs are non-profit organizations, such as Kaiser Permanente, that pay physicians a salary. These physicians work at a central facility and see only HMO enrollees. The record shows that the quality of care in these established HMOs is as good as in the fee-for-service sector and the cost is less. Venture capitalists and established insurance companies took a look at the success of these prepayment plans and saw an opportunity. But most of the new HMOs have no central facility. Instead, they contract with private physicians to care for HMO patients in their own offices along with their other patients. Although some of these HMOs pay physicians on a modified fee-for-service basis, the more successful ones operate "risk" physician payment systems.

Here's how it works. As a private practitioner, I contract with the HMO to provide services to enrollees who select me as their primary care physician "gatekeeper." I get a monthly fee, called a "capitation" (payment by the head), for each HMO enrollee who signs on with me. The capitation payment averages about ten dollars a month, with some variation based on the age and sex of the enrollee. Whether the enrollee comes in once during the year or 20 times, my payment from the HMO remains constant at ten dollars a month for that person. It is all supposed to average out.

Now comes the "risk" part. For every ten dollars in capitation I receive, the HMO sets aside another $40 or so in a separate account. This account pays the hospital bills, fees for specialist care, laboratory and X-rays, and other services performed outside of my office. Every time one of the patients on my panel receives a specialty service, my separate account is debited. But I am the one who decides if they need this special attention. As gatekeeper, I must give permission for all non-emergency referrals.

The HMO audits my account annually. If it shows a surplus, I receive a bonus, usually 30 percent to 50 percent of the total surplus in my account. If it shows a deficit, I have to forfeit a portion of my monthly capitations, as much as 25 percent. In essence, I am paying for part of every specialty consultation, every hospital day, every ancillary service that the patient receives. The economic incentives are clear: keep the patient away from consultants, out of the hospital, and out of the office.

The rewards are breathtaking. The capitation income of a full-time HMO practice with 1,500 enrollees would total $180,000 a year, out of which office overhead of perhaps $80,000 must be paid. A forfeit of 25 percent would result in a loss of $45,000. But a surplus account could generate a bonus of as much as $20,000 or $30,000 or more. Thus, under a typical HMO "risk" payment system, take-home annual income might vary by $65,000 or more. It all depends on the health of the particular patient population the doctor serves, and on the kind of medical care he is willing to provide.

Most private doctors do not have full-time HMO practices. Nevertheless, the HMO's goal is to give physicians enough patients that the cost-cutting incentives of the "risk" payment system are meaningful. The better the doctor does in maximizing his own income, the better the HMO does in the marketplace. Princeton University economics Professor Uwe Reinhardt refers to this relationship as a joint venture between HMOs and doctors.

AN ELDERLY WOMAN who signed up to receive her care in an HMO, a new option that Medicare offers beneficiaries, selected me as her primary care physician. At the time she enrolled, she was becoming ill from what proved to be a rare, inoperable cancer. My total compensation from the HMO for my ten hours of work on her behalf was $69. To add insult to injury, payments to surgeons and other specialists and the large hospital bills drained the bonus account. Had she been a standard Medicare patient, my compensation would have been about $750.

At a time when the doctor-patient relationship should be closest, concerned with the emotions surrounding death and dying, the HMO payment system introduced a divisive factor. I ended up resenting the seemingly unending medical needs of the patient and the continuing demands placed on me by her distraught family. To me, her personal physician, this Medicare beneficiary effectively had become a "charity patient."

Under the "risk" payment HMO system, very sick patients devastate my account. Patients who come in often for care from me, at no charge, or who want a referral for specialty care begin to look like abusers. Whether or not serious underprovision of care will be demonstrated, the primary care gatekeeper working at "risk" has at the very least a major conflict of interest, which should be disclosed to all potential enrollees. To my knowledge no HMO has tried to promote the virtues of this payment system: "Enroll with us—the less care you receive, the better your doctor does."

An acceptable physician payment system should be based on a few straightforward principles. A physician work ethic should be encouraged, with effort rewarded. Doctor income should not depend inordinately upon the

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choice of alternative clinical decisions. The fundamental professional relationship in which the doctor is the patient's agent should be fostered or, at least, not trampled upon. Natural inflationary pressures that keep raising the cost of health care to society should not be fed further by the incentives of the physician payment system.

Both the traditional fee for service and the HMO "risk" payment system fail these principles. Fee for service rewards expensive and potentially risky procedures more than cheaper and safer health management approaches. It is inherently inflationary. "Risk" introduces a fundamental conflict of interest for the physician and penalizes vigilant patient care. Under both payment methods, medical decisions can be overshadowed by pocketbook considerations.

Alternatives do exist. Almost half of U.S. doctors are paid a salary. Salary is not without problems, at least in settings, usually immune from marketplace competition, where doctors have virtually complete job security and can easily become complacent. Or in settings, including some traditional HMOs, where doctors are expected to care for too many patients. Without any incentives at all, salary payment may not be ideal. But at least salaried doctors do not stand to benefit or suffer financially for each and every clinical decision they make.

Salary is not a realistic option for most of the 300,000 U.S. doctors in private practice. Fee-for-service arrangements continue to predominate. Fee for service needn't be as inflationary as it is if third-party payers (insurance companies, HMOs, Medicare, and Medicaid) set physician reimbursement rates based on supply and demand in the marketplace—that is, the amount needed to persuade enough doctors to supply the necessary service, rather than paying more or less whatever doctors wish to charge. Fee-for-service reforms could lead to better health, as well as reduced cost, if fee schedules were designed to encourage performance of more "cognitive" services rather than expensive tests and procedures. Even a thoughtful fee schedule might not result in reduced spending for physician services, because of the demonstrated ability of doctors to find more and more services to provide and bill for. But even if the total payout did not change, patients would benefit from increased doctor emphasis on preventive medicine and education. In the long run, the public health might even improve.

But HMOs, because they contract with a relatively small number of physicians and sell their product in a competitive marketplace, are better suited than distant insurance companies and government bureaucracies to introduce physician payment innovations that truly reward performance. (Dare we call it merit pay?) If kept to perhaps ten percent or 15 percent of total compensation, a modified "risk" payment method might offer proper incentives for cost-conscious behavior. Unfortunately, to date, HMOs have chosen to reward doctors only for keeping down costs, using the "risk" payment method. Of nine HMO contracts offered to me, not one gives me any financial incentive to work for high ratings of patient satisfaction or for meeting recommended standards of preventive medicine.

ROBERT A. BERENSON

Robert A. Berenson is an internist in private practice in Washington. He was a member of the Domestic Policy Staff in the Carter White House.

HART I

PUMPING POLICY

BY MORTON KONDRACKE

AS WALTER MONDALE predicted, the chickens of Reaganism seem to be coming home to roost. The budget deficit is not closing and the trade deficit is getting worse. The dollar's value is collapsing, inflation is going up, interest rates are on the rise, and the Reagan boom, fueled by borrowing, may end with a thud. Yet the Democratic candidates of 1988 are not basing their campaigns on 1984-style gloom and naysaying. They certainly are not hesitating to bash Reagan, much as Reagan bashed Carter in 1980, but they have finally learned from Reagan's example that they need to sound positive, future-oriented, and optimistic, rallying the electorate instead of depressing it.

Richard Gephardt has the rhetoric of fiber-optic optimism down pat: "As we enter the new world of the 21st century," he said in announcing his candidacy on February 23, "we are determined to make America first again . . . first in economic leadership, first in national strength, first in its commitment to the vindication of human rights and the survival of the human race." Senator Joe Biden is sounding a similar theme, with a touch of defiance added: "I am not going to be satisfied just to 'compete,' which has become the new rage among Washington politicians who think that chanting slogans is enough. 'Compete' means you can lose, but I am not interested in losing. I want America to

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win. The Japanese, the Europeans, the Koreans—they strive to win the economic contest, and so must America. We can do better. We must do better." And the front-runner, Gary Hart, called his book on military reform *America Can Win*. In announcing his "Strategic Investment Initiative" for modernizing the economy, he said, "This nation now needs . . . no less than a national commitment to excellence—to ensure that we once again have the world's best schools, job-training systems, and technology infrastructure by the year 2000."

Hart and all those chasing him are casting themselves as the reincarnation of John F. Kennedy—the young activist who will "get the country moving again" after years of geriatric drift, and will challenge the citizenry to public service again after a time of self-indulgence. As Gephardt put it, "Our government has failed the people. Instead of asking something of us, they have given us a call to selfishness. They have not summoned us to think about the future, but only to think about ourselves." In early 1985 Hart was issuing a call for "true patriotism" to contrast with Reaganite "ease and comfort." He said that "there is a higher purpose for a great nation than outdated political arrangements on the one hand, or self-interest, materialism, and selfishness on the other." It lay, he said, in "excellence, justice, and community" and "growth."

THE DEMOCRATS clearly are trying to recapture the flag, identify themselves with bedrock American values, and create the impression that they are in tune with the high-tech, highly competitive future. Except for Representative Jack Kemp, Reagan's spiritual heir, the 1988 Republicans are rhetorically far behind, unable or unwilling to rise above the immediate landscape to describe the political horizon beyond. Whereas Kemp, like Reagan, emphasizes the value of freedom as the driving force of progress, the Democrats are emphasizing government leadership—but, they hasten to add, it is not to be bureaucratic, not to be dominated by special interests, but directed by a vigorous president to serve, as Hart puts it, "the national interest."

The Democrats do have their buzzwords in order. Is there substance beneath the new veneer? In most cases, it's too early to tell. Position papers are still being drafted, and there has been little opportunity for intense scrutiny and debate. But in terms of spelling out his vision, Hart is as far ahead of his rivals as he is in the opinion polls. Some of his advisers believe that he might have better spent the last two-and-a-half years cleaning up his 1984 campaign debt, but instead Hart concentrated on re-establishing himself as the candidate of ideas.

That was the franchise he tried to claim in 1984, but he was unaccountably struck dumb by Walter Mondale's question, "Where's the beef?" This time there's no doubt it's there. Hart has meticulously described his foreign policy in a series of Georgetown University lectures, co-authored a book on defense, and put out comprehensive programs in education, debt, trade, and industrial modernization. This month he will release his own federal budget, macroeconomic report, and anti-poverty program.

Hart has not changed his mind fundamentally about big issues. Despite pressure from unions and other candidates, he tried to oppose domestic-content legislation in 1984, and he is against protectionism now in what's shaping up as the first major fight of the 1988 season. The Democratic trade war pits Hart (and Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis) on one side and Gephardt (with former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt) on the other.

ALL OF THE Democratic candidates think that the United States needs to de-emphasize America's military and political rivalry with the Soviet Union and put more brains and resources into the economic rivalry with Japan. All of them also say that their first priority is to make American workers and industries more productive, but they disagree about whether (as Gephardt proposes) to impose automatic trade penalties and keep out the products of countries that maintain consistently favorable trade balances with the United States. Gephardt says this is a threat intended to pry open Japan's markets, not to close American markets. But a Hart aide called it "punishing countries for doing well the way we used to and want to again."

In 1985, when Democratic Senator Lloyd Bentsen and Representatives Gephardt and Dan Rostenkowski proposed a 25 percent tariff on imports from Japan, South Korea, Brazil, and Taiwan, Hart denounced it by quoting Cordell Hull's description of the 1929 Smoot-Hawley Tariff—"a destructive policy of extremism"—and by warning that they were starting "a new trade war" in which "American workers, farmers, and businesses will do the heavy fighting." Hart has toned down his language lately, declining to attack Gephardt directly, but he has not backed down on his position that protectionism constitutes "isolationism."

Eventually Hart's position might prove politically smart—if voters come to see that they will be hurt by diminished trade and higher prices more than some workers are helped by import restrictions—but right now it's courageous. Hart's trade program, introduced in 1985 along with Senators Bill Bradley, Sam Nunn, and Spark Matsunaga, calls for international monetary reform (a new Bretton Woods conference to establish currency targets and prevent wide fluctuations in the value of the dollar), punishment of proved unfair trade practices (by removing most-favored-nation status from offending parties), export promotion (such as liberalizing antitrust laws and creating a corporation to exploit commercially discoveries at federal research labs), and productivity enhancement (including worker retraining and high-tech research incentives). All of this identifies America's trade problems as principally America's responsibility. Current polls indicate that most Americans want to blame them on Japan.

The other day Babbitt lumped Hart with Reagan as a believer in laissez-faire economics. That's ridiculous. On domestic economics, he's an active interventionist. Two days after his official announcement of candidacy, for example, he visited a giant, closed-down steel plant in Homestead, Pennsylvania, and promised that "if I get

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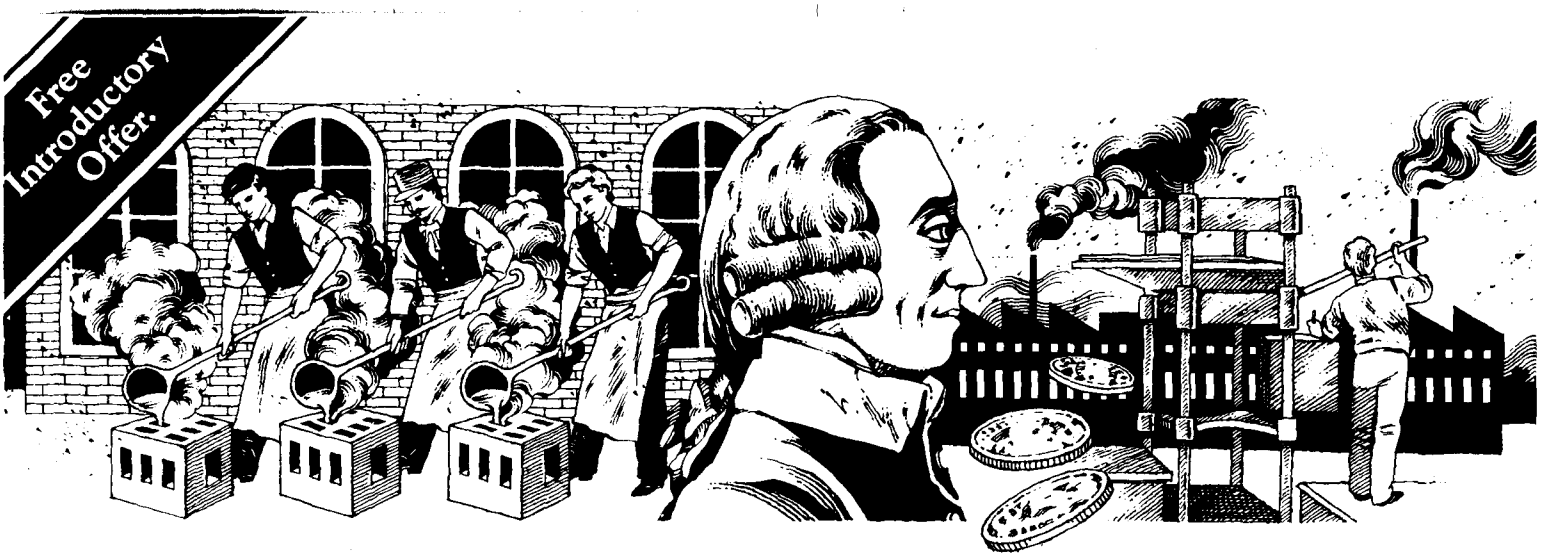

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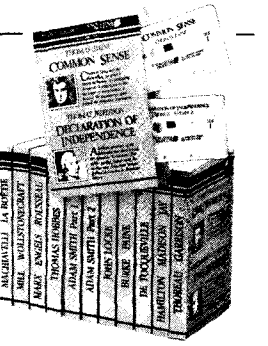

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elected, you're going to see the steel mills of this country come back up." How? Hart wants a program to rebuild roads, bridges, and tunnels ("infrastructure," not public works), and part of his defense reform program is to build new cargo ships to upgrade the country's sealift capacity.

His steel program is part of a more general "keystone industry" modernization program for autos, machine tools, and energy that would involve White House-brokered agreements between management, labor, banks, and the government to provide loan guarantees, wage restraint, and even temporary protection from imports for industries willing to modernize. In 1984 such "industrial policy" was condemned as smokestack-era New Dealism, but Hart calls it "industrial policy" today, and says it's justified in the name of national security as well as job creation.

Perhaps Hart's widest departure from free market economics is his endorsement of Iowa Senator Tom Harkin's "supply management" farm bill, which would allocate market quotas to farmers and guarantee prices at up to double their current depressed levels. Hart said he views it as a temporary, voluntary, "Jeffersonian" device to tide family farmers over a crisis caused by Reaganite high interest rates, and one that will lower the cost of federal farm supports.

The problem, of course, is that the Harkin bill (cosponsored by Gephardt) calls for the government to set prices and abolish competition, and for consumers (as opposed to taxpayers) to pay the cost of farm subsidies. It is voluntary only in that a majority of growers have to vote it in; after that, it's mandatory. It is also unlikely to be temporary, because it does nothing permanent to solve the problem of overproduction in agriculture. And it practically guarantees protectionism in agriculture to prevent cheaper foreign farm products from entering the country. For Hart to oppose Gephardt on trade but join him on the Harkin bill shows that courage has its limits when Iowa is at stake.

HART'S MAJOR DEVICE for getting this country moving again is improved education. He wants to extend the school year beyond the usual 180 days (though it's not clear he would match Japan's 240), expand compensatory education for the underprivileged, regularly test pupil and teacher competence (here he's at odds with the powerful National Education Association), upgrade science and language teaching, promote lifetime worker-retraining opportunities, and stimulate private and university research.

It's clear that Hart's heart is in the right place. His Strategic Investment Initiative, encompassing his education and technology proposals, was unveiled with the most appealing possible statements of good intentions—to promote "hard work and entrepreneurialism," "reach all 12 million youth in need of compensatory education," "target tens of millions of displaced workers and the economically disadvantaged," and encourage "long-term thinking" whereby the current generation would forgo immediate gratification for the benefit of succeeding generations.

Inevitably, however, Hart is promising more than he can deliver. His "infrastructure" program cannot possibly reopen all of America's steel mills. It's budgeted at only $3 billion a year—and it's only a loan program for state and local government. His investment initiative does involve more money—all told, about $10 billion a year at the federal level—but that will not pay the enormous cost of extending the school year and increasing teacher salaries, which the states would have to do on their own. As Hart says, "The ultimate tragedy of Reaganomics is that the budget deficits put a limit on all the things we want and need to do." As a result, Hart and all other Democrats are forced to adopt a "partnership" or "catalyst" role for the federal government and invent ways to stimulate activity that Washington can't pay for.

The Democrats, of course, could pay for them if they were willing to increase taxes substantially or slash U.S. defense and foreign commitments, but at present only Jesse Jackson is willing to do the latter in a big way, and no one wants the former. Hart's budget will call for a top income tax rate of 33 percent (instead of 28 percent) to raise $16 billion a year and a $10 per barrel oil import fee for $18 billion, and he will consider excise taxes and tariffs (to replace current import quotas) as needed to bring the deficit down to "the low double digits in five years." Hart also wants to cut some domestic spending by reducing payments to Medicare providers and transferring the cost of farm supports. He favors zero growth for the Pentagon budget.

ON DEFENSE, Hart aims to improve significantly America's conventional forces so that NATO could blunt a Soviet attack in Europe without resorting to nuclear weapons, and therefore deter an invasion from ever taking place. He thinks that the task requires not vast new sums of money for weapons and manpower, but reform of U.S. military strategy, procurement, and training.

The last thing Hart wants to do, in fact, is actually fight. In his defense book, in his latest novel, and in his foreign policy lectures, he repeatedly makes clear that his greatest fear in all the world is that some local conflict will lead to a superpower confrontation and nuclear war. So Hart has set down a gauntlet of seven stiff tests to be met before U.S. forces ever would be used (including evidence of a vital national interest, public support, exhaustion of other means, and a clear, simple, and achievable war plan). It's hard to imagine any military proposal that would meet them all, and in recent history Hart has supported not one U.S. military action, including the invasion of Grenada and the bombing of Libya.

The point here is not that a president should look for places to get U.S. soldiers killed. Rather, it is that when adversaries think a U.S. president is self-deterred from using force, they may be more likely to take advantage of him. Similarly, Hart has expressed deep suspicion about Soviet aims and methods. "Moscow's drive for hegemony is not likely to dissipate in our lifetime," he said in one of his Georgetown lectures. But what do the Soviets make of Hart's decision to have Stephen Cohen of Princeton accompany him to Moscow and Cohen's decision to endorse

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Hart afterward? Among prominent U.S. Sovietologists, Cohen has most consistently blamed the United States for the cold war and subsequent tensions, and argued that Mikhail Gorbachev represents an historic opportunity for the establishment of détente. Hart says that his association with Cohen was an accident, and that he listens to other Soviet experts too, but Soviets may calculate that they have less need to yield in order to reach a bargain.

Unlike George McGovern, the man who gave him his start in politics, Hart's foreign policy does not exude guilt. It is based, rather, on "realism"—the notion that the United States does not have the resources to control events as widely as it did immediately after World War II. Hart makes a strong case that the United States still can use its influence politically and economically to expand democracy and prosperity abroad—notably, by championing human rights and offering debt relief in return for economic reform in the Third World. He firmly declares that he is not an isolationist or a pacifist. The danger is that America's enemies might think he is and force him to prove he isn't.

Hart comes through, in his speeches and books, as a moderate and a modernist—one who wants to use government to stimulate change, not dominate the economy. He is the descendant of John Kennedy, not Franklin Roosevelt. And he does not want to abandon the outside world or change sides in the contest between democracy and "liberation," so he is more in the tradition of Jimmy Carter than George McGovern. And this combination might work, in 1988 politics and in the presidency, provided Ronald Reagan's chickens truly have not come home to roost. But if debt—the binge of borrowing undertaken by government, business, individuals, and foreign countries over the last ten years—should produce an economic collapse, and if Reagan turns out to be not a Republican FDR but another Herbert Hoover, all of Gary Hart's position papers may have to be thrown away, and he might have to improvise policy amid a panic. It's a good sign for now that he's kept his head about protectionism.

HART II

ALL SMILES

BY FRED BARNES

AT TWIN PINES GROCERY in rural Elmore County, Alabama, on April 25, Gary Hart put on four different hats. He found a broad-brimmed farmer's hat just inside the front door. "It's a Colorado hat," he explained, planting it on his head. At Bear Bryant Corner, the store's shrine to the late University of Alabama football coach, he chose from dozens of Alabama baseball hats. He tried on one that said "Bama." Outside, an elderly man handed him a hat that said "Auburn." Hart put it on briefly. Finally he accepted a green hat that advertised "Wilson Spreader Service," a local fertilizer company. He wore it with apparent pride.

Gary Hart isn't a hat fetishist. As he pulled away from the country store in a van, he confided that he used to balk at putting on hats. In 1983 and '84 he declined every time for fear of looking silly. "But it got too awkward. I said, 'What the hell?' Really silly ones I won't put on. There are limits." His wife, Lee, interjected, "You wouldn't put on a Mickey Mouse hat?" Hart answered indirectly. "That's what a campaign is all about—finding limits."

Gary Hart hasn't found many limits in his bid for the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination. During his 1984 campaign, he was chilly, unaccommodating, and often irascible. When discussing anything beyond "new ideas," he was ill at ease. He talked about himself about as comfortably as President Reagan talks about Iranamok. This time he has unleashed a charm offensive that would put Mikhail Gorbachev to shame. He smiles unrelentingly and seeks out people to greet. When a factory boss in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, introduced his wife to Hart, Hart responded effusively. "Ohhhhhhh, I'm so glad to meet you." He now plays softball with the press. He pitched two innings in Griffin, Georgia, on April 26. He speaks at black churches, most recently giving a sermon on the Old Testament book of Micah at Antioch Baptist Church in Atlanta.

These are all big changes for Hart. I interviewed him twice during the 1984 campaign. The first time, during a plane ride over Iowa, he gazed out the window, fiddled with papers, and said practically nothing. The second time was on a plane ride from Texas to Louisiana. One of his aides set a time for my interview, but then delayed it, saying that Hart was busy. As I waited, I walked by his seat. He was reading a novel, a bad one at that. In this campaign, he's readily accessible. I talked to him on a van ride (from Elmore County to Eclectic, Alabama) for 40 minutes. He leaned over back of his seat and answered questions. His wife also threw out her thoughts.

Being the front-runner for a presidential nomination has affected Hart in an unusual way. It made George Bush slightly manic in 1980, Walter Mondale stiff and formal in 1984. Hart is looser, more confident, and thus more appealing. He even indulges in self-effacing humor, making light of the "character issue" that dogs him. In one speech he re-

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called filling out a form after leaving the Senate last fall and resuming a law practice in Denver. He mentioned some of the questions. Ever been in debt? He paused, rolling his eyes. When were you born? He paused again. This was inside political humor (Hart has a lingering debt from his 1984 race, and used to fudge on his birth date), but it worked. At a Washington fund-raiser on April 21, he said, "Eat fast before the marshals get your silverware." Six days earlier federal marshals, acting on behalf of a 1984 creditor, had seized checks at Hart's Los Angeles fund-raiser.

There's a point to Hart's bonhomie. It's made him a far better candidate, more formidable than the Washington political community and press have yet recognized. In 1984 the Hart campaign was attractive from a distance, the candidate a fresh face representing a new generation of leaders. Up close, it was ugly, torn by factionalism and led by an insecure candidate unwilling to assert control. The new Hart campaign is the reverse. Because of harsh media coverage, it appears grim and beleaguered from afar. In person, Hart looks like an imposing front-runner.

HART CAME INTO the 1988 race with three tasks (beyond the task of organizing an effective campaign team). First, he had to answer Mondale's question from 1984: Where's the beef? Hart has done that with a series of speeches and position papers that began in 1985 and culminates in May with three addresses on economic policy and the release of his 1988 federal budget. His grade on this task: A. Second, he had to flesh out his personality and overcome his image as cold and impassive. The charm offensive has helped. Grade: B, showing great progress. Third, he had to deal with the character issue, the nagging questions raised by Hart's tinkering with his birth date, changing his name, altering his signature, and twice separating from his wife. This problem has been complicated by published rumors of womanizing and a controversy over the 1984 debt. Grade: incomplete, needs improvement.

For the record, Hart and his campaign aides say the character issue is a figment of the past, something he banished in 1984. "This campaign takes no account of the fact his family changed his name 26 years ago," says Bill Dixon, the campaign manager and former chief of Hart's Senate staff. Nearly every official at campaign headquarters in Denver pretends there is a different character issue in 1988. "Character is standing up to Reaganomics when it wasn't popular," says Dixon. "Leadership, competence, the ability to stand up for what you believe in, the ability to articulate a blueprint on how you're going to accomplish what you've promised—that's character," says John Emerson, the deputy campaign manager and a California lawyer.

In truth, Hart and his strategists are obsessed with the character issue. It is the overriding concern of his campaign, all the more so because of Hart's unsuccessful attempts so far to snuff the issue. The worst of these came two years ago when Hart appeared on "Crossfire," the bruising political talk show on Cable News Network. Hart spurned questions about his name change and age mix-up. "Do you think those things are important questions in the whole cosmic world of things?" he asked interviewer Tom Braden. Yes, Braden said. Hart's forehead dampened with beads of sweat that were visible to the TV audience. At the break, he said, "What would happen if I were to leave this program right now?" Braden pleaded with him to stay. "Well, I'll stay as a favor to you," said Hart. "But I tell you—this is intolerable, what's going on here."

Hart's most ambitious stab at expunging the character issue was a 5,000-word essay he wrote last year entitled "One Man's Luck." Aides had long been advising him to satisfy the public thirst for personal information. One day Hart gave the essay to Beth Smith, the communications director of the campaign. He'd written it without telling anyone. "I was amazed," says Smith. "I was surprised he revealed so much information about himself. But it's what people wanted." She shopped the piece around, but the *New York Times Magazine*, the *Atlantic*, and *Reader's Digest* weren't interested. The *Boston Globe* printed the piece in February.

Ostensibly the essay did nothing more than let Hart tell about himself. But he managed to touch on all the strands of the character issue. His mother, Nina, was born in 1909, he wrote. Parenthetically, he added, "my mother's tongue-in-cheek disputation of this date was a matter of family humor throughout her life—a tradition I carried on. It was a mistake, given the seriousness with which even minor factual errors are regarded in the post-Watergate era." On his name change in 1961 from Hartpence, Hart wrote: "Culminating a discussion that had continued off and on most of my conscious life, my parents—joined by Lee and me—determined to restore our family name to what we had always considered its original form—Hart. The Library of Congress now says Pence might have been more accurate. But in those days, the Library of Congress was not available to us."

A RECURRING THEME in the essay is the importance of Hart's wife. She "stood out from the beginning" when he went to Bethany Nazarene College, he said. "Always attracted by a challenge, I pursued her. And her obvious disdain for me—a bumpkin—made her even more appealing. Two months after graduation, Lee and I were married." She got him through law school at Yale by teaching high school English. And her "brilliant campaigning" was critical to his election to the Senate in 1974. As for his marital problems: "Comment was made of the fact that Lee and I suffered short separations. . . . Coming in an age of divorced presidents, this seems to deserve no more attention than that. Lee is proud of reflecting, as she should be, that we were able to resolve temporary stresses where others were not. In 1988, we will celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary."

Lee Hart is now a constant presence in the campaign, a kind of proof against the womanizer rumors. In his speeches, Hart introduces her as "the first lady of the Hart campaign." Except sometimes he forgets to introduce her. This happened on a recent campaign trip to Texas. At a town meeting in Wilson, North Carolina, on April 23, Hart stopped midway through his speech and said, "Oh, and

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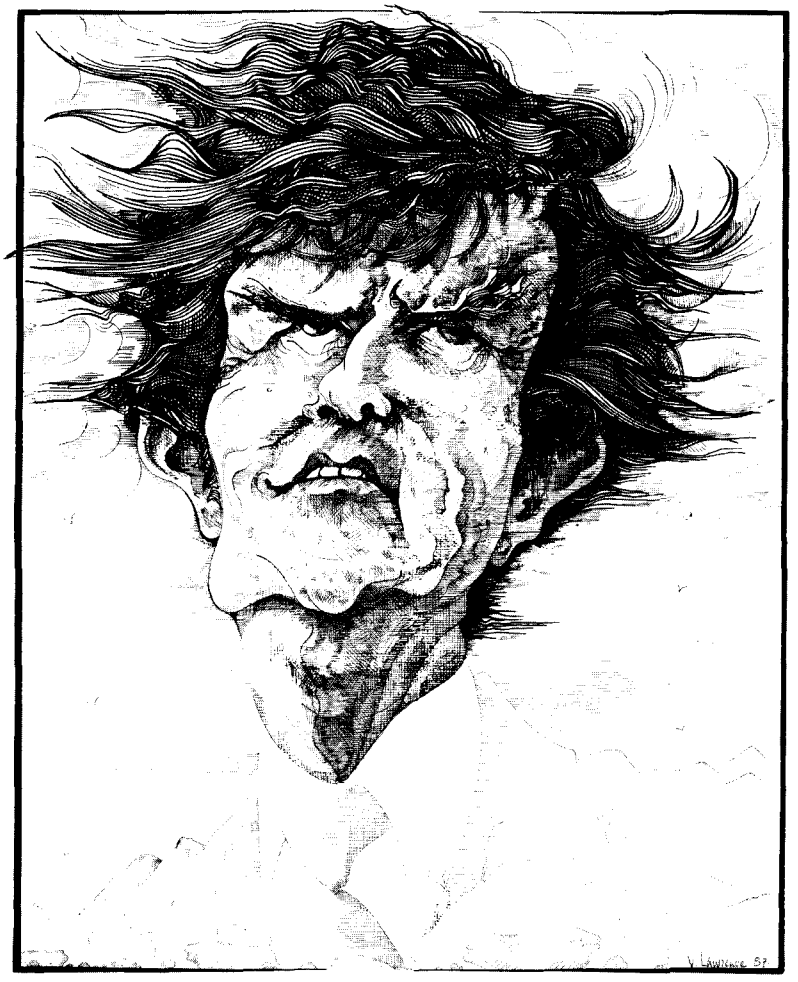
speaking of what America has given me." Then he introduced his wife. At another appearance in Wilson, he took off his coat, exposing a wrinkled shirt. This wasn't his wife's fault, he said. She "does a really good job of ironing shirts."

The Hart essay caused a mini-flap because of his claim that at age four in Kansas he "came almost face to face with a large gray wolf," and recently in Colorado he "tracked a timber wolf a hundred yards from our door." Leonard Larsen, a columnist with the *Denver Post*, challenged his assertion, noting that the Audubon Society's 1986 wilderness report says wolves have been virtually extinct in the West since 1930. The childhood encounter with a wolf is left out of the version of the essay that his campaign now distributes, and the account of the second encounter was changed to say he "tracked what appeared to be a timber wolf."



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

On April 1 Hart's image-warming took him to his hometown of Ottawa, Kansas, a farming community an hour's drive from Kansas City. Raymond Strother, the media consultant who produced Hart's TV commercials in 1984, says Hart came across in his first race "like a man who dropped from another planet, a man from nowhere." Knowing he "has to deal with" this problem, says Strother, Hart "goes to his hometown. He's making a great effort not to be so private and personal." At a town meeting in Ottawa, Hart got choked with emotion when he spoke of his parents. Patrick Yack of the *Denver Post*, who has covered Hart more extensively than any other reporter, says it was the first time he'd seen Hart display strong emotion. The visit played up a strange aspect of Hart's upbringing. The Ottawa paper ran a map on the front page showing the locations of the 16 houses Hart and his parents lived in during his youth.

The biggest threat to Hart's new image is his reputation as a welsher. "The most stupid thing they [campaign officials] have done is not take care of the debt," says a Hart adviser. "Any time you have stories about your campaign that begin, 'Federal marshals today . . . ,' you're in trouble. Besides, the debt lets opponents ask, How can he run the country if he can't run his own campaign?" The debt has been whittled from $4.7 million down to $1.3 million, partly by paying creditors a fraction of what they are owed (Strother got ten percent of the last $150,000 of his bill for media work). But deadlines for wiping it out entirely have repeatedly not been met, and now Dixon vows the debt will be gone by the time the first vote is cast in Iowa next February. Hart's alibi is that his refusal to take political action committee money has made it difficult to pare the debt. But he has also seemed indifferent at times to the plight of his creditors. A few weeks ago, he told the *Rocky Mountain News* that "all I've heard for the last two years is the debt. Debt, debt, debt. I don't care about the debt. It's not a big issue in the minds of the people." It is in Dixon's mind. To counter criticism, he's suggested that Hart should be lauded for reducing the debt as much as he has. If Hart had been managing the country's finances in this fashion, Dixon says, the deficit "would be down to $12 billion, not up to $220 billion."

For Hart, the good news about the character issue is that it's flourishing now. "If it has to happen, let's have it happen in early 1987, not early 1988," says Strother. "Stories wear out. If we dispose of all the character questions before the public starts paying attention, it won't be much of a problem." This assumes, of course, that new aspects of the character issue won't crop up.

Hart's eagerness to avoid the pitfalls of being frontrunner has worked against image-softening. He announced his candidacy on April 13 while standing on a rock near his home outside Denver. He was "trying to separate himself from the Eastern establishment" and be "a man alone," says Strother. He succeeded. This time his headquarters is in Denver, not Washington. "It's just where we live," says Hart. "I'm not running, as others have in the past, a campaign against Washington." Hart

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also likes to stump in rural areas, which is unusual for a front-runner. "It's symbolically important," he says. "It tells people what kind of campaign you're running. Most candidates go to the press conferences, the media centers, the fund-raisers, and leave." And he hasn't drummed up endorsements, as other front-runners have. He'll have enough eventually, promises Kevin Sweeney, Hart's press secretary. The press, normally skeptical of candidates who pursue an endorsement strategy, has questioned why the folks who know Hart best, his former Senate colleagues, haven't rushed to his side. Well, they didn't in 1984 either.

Hart's strategy calls for him to stay out of political spats with other candidates. "It just detracts," says Emerson. In 1985 and '86, "he didn't want to be in all the political stories," says Dixon. "He didn't want to comment every time [Democratic National Chairman] Paul Kirk did something. He didn't want to comment every time someone came in or got out of the race." Hart has shown remarkable restraint. Asked a leading question on April 24 about George Bush and the Iran arms scandal, he was tempted to dig at Bush. "What was going through my mind was three or four funny things," says Hart. "I've learned to check myself. I used to pop off more." He has popped off but once in the campaign, and that got him in trouble. He suggested on April 14 that other campaigns might be spreading the womanizing rumors. This drew attention to the rumors. It was a mistake, but Hart is "only human," says Emerson.

There's an advantage to being the front-runner in a large field: none of Hart's seven opponents (eight if Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton gets in) can get enough attention to emerge as a strong challenger before the caucuses or primaries begin next February. There's also a disadvantage. Hart is all alone out front, a target for the press. "Being a target isn't a lot of fun," he says. "It comes with the territory. It's a question of what kind of front-runner you are. The danger of visibility is if you've got nothing to say. I welcome the visibility." But not always. On Hart's Southern swing in late April, his geniality disappeared one time. On April 25 a TV reporter confronted him as he entered a fairgrounds in Columbus, Georgia. He was asked if the rumors of womanizing would hurt him in the South and the Bible Belt. "Not at all," he said, "because they're not true." He didn't hang around for follow-up questions.

AN EXCHANGE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

In several editorials and articles over recent months, TNR *has argued that any fair solution to the federal budget impasse cannot exempt Social Security benefits. Our argument is that Social Security, a $210 billion item in fiscal 1987, has become a highly regressive redistribution scheme. It is regressive in three senses. First, the average retiree beneficiary is now better off, by most measures, than the average working* FICA *taxpayer. Second, today's retirees—who paid tiny* FICA *taxes during most of their working lives—are getting a far higher return on their Social Security "investment" than future retirees will enjoy. Third, the* FICA *tax itself is highly regressive: a flat tax on wages that exempts investment income and disappears at $43,800 a year.*

TNR *believes that Social Security beneficiaries should contribute, like everyone else, to solving the nation's fiscal dilemma. Savings from trimming Social Security benefits should be used partly to reduce the deficit and partly to reduce the increasingly burdensome* FICA *tax, which now totals 14.3 percent and is higher than the income tax for most working-class people.*

TNR*'s position has elicited the following comment from James Tobin, Sterling Professor of Economics in the Cowles Foundation at Yale and winner of the 1981 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science. The editors' reply is written by Michael Kinsley.*

To the editors:

There you go again! TNR's repeated attacks on Social Security are a travesty of evenhandedness. President Reagan's intransigent demagoguery on taxes is surely the overwhelming source of the budget impasse. Looking for a culprit to assign equal blame to, you latch on to congressional Democrats' resistance to cuts in old folks' entitlements. You bracket Social Security with farm subsidies as unfair and regressive residues of the New Deal, as if a program covering the whole population were just another subsidy to a special interest.

TNR evidently proposes to use savings from entitlements to reduce the deficit, lower "regressive" payroll taxes, and finance "necessary new spending initiatives"—all at once! In any case, TNR wants to scrap Old Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI), under which workers become entitled to benefits by payroll tax contributions, and to substitute needs-tested welfare transfers financed from general revenues and dependent on year-to-year budgetary politics.

I shall argue: First, Social Security is not to blame for Reagan's deficits, and cuts in Social Security entitlements should play no part in reducing them. Second, your allegation that OASI is regressive, because some working contributors are poorer than some retired beneficiaries, is meaningless and irrelevant. Third, equity among generations is a complex issue; although the generation now or about to be retired has in some sense lucked out, that does not justify violating their legitimate expectations. Fourth, the benefits should be more firmly and clearly linked to contributions, not replaced by welfare transfers.

1. *Social Security and the deficit.* Social Security is not contributing to the deficit. The receipts of the OASI Trust Fund exceed its outlays. Social Security is standing on its own feet, as it has for 50 years. Cutting present Social Security entitlements to reduce the federal deficit diverts payroll taxes to finance Reagan's

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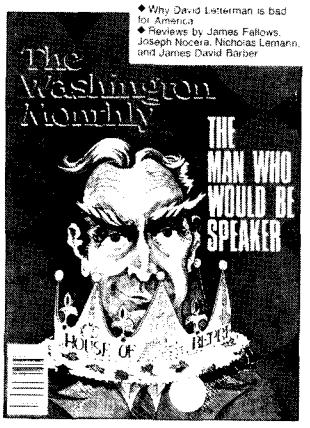
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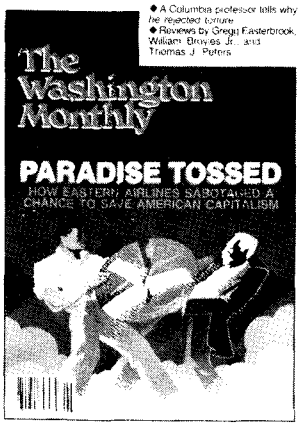
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defense buildup and income tax cuts.

With Social Security in the black, the causes and cures of the deficit and of the scarcity of funds for new initiatives must be sought elsewhere. Personal and corporate income taxes yielded revenues equal to 11.6 percent of GNP in 1979; even the always optimistic OMB does not expect them to yield more than 10.7 percent in 1989. In 1979 defense and debt interest took 6.4 percent of GNP, leaving income taxes of 4.1 percent for other activities. In 1989 defense and interest will take 8.7 percent of GNP, leaving only 2.0 percent for other activities. Reagan's defense buildup and tax cuts, together with ballooning debt interest charges largely attributable to these same policies, have enlarged the deficit and squeezed civilian expenditures.

TNR has evidently forgotten the 1983 amendments to the Social Security Act, statesmanlike compromises carefully crafted to keep the OASI Trust Fund solvent. Their midwife was the Greenspan Commission, whose members included politicians and private citizens, business and labor leaders, old and young, liberals and conservatives, Republicans and Democrats. Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill agreed to this bipartisan legislation. The amendments advanced the dates of tax increases already planned. They did not leave entitlements untouched. They raised gradually the normal retirement age and removed previous incentives for early retirement. They subjected the OASI benefits of the well-to-do to income taxation—a proposal that TNR makes in apparent ignorance of the accomplished fact.

The 1983 amendments are projected to keep the OASI Trust Fund in the black until the middle of the next century. Surpluses of receipts over benefits, as much as two percent of GNP in the 1990s, will build up the Trust Fund until 2010, after which those reserves will gradually be paid out in pensions.

2. *Is Social Security regressive?* You say it is, because some young payers of payroll taxes are poorer than some "relatively prosperous" elderly beneficiaries. Inequalities of income and wealth due to age are not social problems to which the concepts "regressive" and "progressive" meaningfully apply. Total lifetime resources are the relevant measure. My graduate student assistant makes a lot less than I do, just as I made less at his age than my professors. But the young assistant will typically become wealthier than his elder was.

You persist in misunderstanding OASI. You disregard all connection between an individual's history of payroll tax contributions and his or her eventual benefits. Is an insurance pool or a contributory private pension scheme regressive because some payers of premiums are poorer than some beneficiaries? The taxes on a young worker's wages will earn retirement benefits, just as the benefits of today's elderly are linked to past contributions by them and their employers.

OASI, it is true, is not pure insurance; it is a mixture of "defined contribution" pensions and redistributive transfers. The formula linking contributions to monthly benefits is quite progressive. A minimum-wage worker gets 23 percent larger annuities per dollar of tax contributions than a contemporary with high earnings. Prosperity during retirement is now additionally penalized by selective income taxation of benefits. To enhance the progressivity of OASI, the Treasury could contribute to the Trust Fund from general revenues on behalf of workers with low annual earnings, especially the unemployed.

As for those elderly whose current affluence so exercises TNR, why not tax the incomes that make them—and younger people too—affluent? Why not arrest the scheduled decline in high-bracket personal income tax rates? Even better, why not hold on to the entire transitional 1987 rate schedule? Isn't that an idea deserving support from a journal of opinion committed to progressivity? We certainly need the revenues.

3. *Intergenerational equity.* TNR complains that today's young workers, rich and poor alike, cannot collectively expect as high a return on their contributions as today's elderly generation enjoys. Demographics and productivity growth are the main reasons. Under OASI's traditional "pay-as-you-go" finance, payroll tax contributions roughly equal contemporaneous benefits. Because of the decline in birthrates, the number of active workers per retiree is projected to decline from 4.5 today to two in midcentury. The earnings base of the payroll tax will grow less rapidly than before 1974.

According to current projections, higher payroll tax rates than those now legislated will eventually be needed—though not until midcentury—if the average "replacement ratio" of OASI benefits to wages is to be maintained near its historical norm of 40 percent. Alternatively, the generations involved could decide not to increase taxes but to allow the replacement ratio to decline, to about 25 percent. Even so, real benefits in 2044 would be about twice as large as in 1984. Let us not prejudge a choice better made next century.

The current older generation was lucky to work and retire in an era when both the labor force covered by OASI and real wages grew rapidly. Its benefit/wage replacement ratio is, however, no higher than that enjoyed by previous generations or projected for succeeding generations. Don't shed too many tears for generations who will be working and retiring in the 21st century. They will be living higher than we did and do, the more so if couples continue to disdain child-rearing and its costs while earning two incomes their full working lives. A system like OASI is an intergenerational compact: each generation supports its elders with the understanding that the next generation will do the same. Generations who choose not to have children will not have grandchildren to support them in old age, but they can scarcely blame their own parents and grandparents.

4. *Firming the link of benefits to contributions.* Are promises not to be kept? Are social compacts to be broken? However you may judge the intergenerational equities of today's OASI entitlements, they were solemnly renegotiated in 1983. Yet before the ink is dry, here is TNR advocating further cuts. And for current beneficiaries, at that.

In wars or other disasters, beneficiaries of social insurance should of course bear their share of the nation's burden. Ronald Reagan's desire to raise military spending while lowering taxes on wealthy citizens is not an emergency justifying disregard of legitimate expectations.

The actions you advocate would feed the cynicism and misunderstanding with which all too many young people view Social Security. Instead we should tighten the links between individual contributions and retirement benefits, and strengthen participants' perception of and confidence in them. The Social Security Administration should report annually to each participant what contributions to date have been made on his or her behalf and what entitlements those taxes have earned under the act as it stands.

Another Greenspan Commission in 2003 could consider moving from pay-as-

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you-go financing to a funded system, a transition that would take the working career of a whole generation. A new fund, a genuine "defined contribution" system, would begin with young workers. It would have to be "off-budget" in fact as well as in name. That is, Congress would have to regard the Treasury's debt to the fund as debt to the public. The coming bulge in the Trust Fund is a start in the right direction, provided the president and Congress resist the temptation to spend it.

TNR wants to go in the opposite direction, abolishing the insurance component of OASI, providing "on-budget" needs-tested welfare handouts from general revenues. The history of needs-tested welfare programs shows that their clients, lacking political clout, fare badly in times of budget austerity and conservative ideology. The incidence of poverty was once much higher among the elderly than in the population at large. Thanks to Social Security, it is now somewhat less. OASI has desirable features private retirement schemes cannot provide. You don't lose entitlements you have earned if you change residences or jobs, or if your employer goes broke. OASI's universal national coverage gives it administrative economies of scale. As intended in 1936, the system gives millions of people security against the dreaded risk of impoverishment in prolonged old age. TNR should not so glibly write off one of the few institutions in our society that works.

JAMES TOBIN
New Haven, Connecticut

The editors reply:
Professor Tobin's analysis of today's federal deficits is, of course, correct. Social Security is actually reducing the total deficit in the sense that more money is coming into the OASI Trust Fund than is going out. But the money is coming in from and going out to different people. The fact that revenues from a particular tax are allocated to a particular spending function is hardly a good reason for either the tax or the spending to escape scrutiny. TNR's position is that both should be cut, for reasons of progressivity as well as fiscal prudence.

The 1983 reforms put the Social Security trust fund in the black for the next several decades, but only by increasing the burden of a regressive tax. The reforms also trimmed benefits for future retirees. As Professor Tobin virtually concedes, further benefit cuts are almost inevitable in the next century. If Social Security benefits are going to be trimmed, why should present retirees—who have had the very best deal—be exempt?

If every current government program is to be regarded as a solemn promise that must be kept, or a social compact that can't be broken, rather than a policy that must be weighed on its merits, no change is possible, whether beneficial or otherwise. The "promise" argument can be used—indeed, is used—by farmers in defense of price supports and businesses in defense of their treasured tax loopholes. It is a conservative way of thinking, and a recipe for paralysis.

Is Social Security "insurance"? It's true that Social Security formulas connect a person's benefits with his or her history of contributions, but not in any actuarially sound way. Virtually all current beneficiaries get far more than they put in, including imputed interest. Future retirees will often get less. (Professor Michael Boskin of Stanford, writing in the March 30 *Fortune*, computes that even without any future benefit reductions, a working couple born in 1945, making $25,000 a year each, will lose $124,000 on Social Security—about the median price of a new home.) Therefore, Professor Tobin's analogy to a private insurance or pension scheme does not seem valid.

It's also true that Social Security formulas are designed to give poorer workers a better return than richer ones. This redistribution from rich to poor within one generation is one of the program's merits. But that redistribution is dwarfed by the unintentional redistribution across the generations.

Professor Tobin impishly suggests that younger workers have no one to blame but themselves if they don't have enough children to support them as comfortably when they retire as they are supporting current retirees. But current Social Security benefits are far higher than the ones today's beneficiaries were providing their own elders during the postwar era. (From 1970 to 1983, Social Security benefits increased by 273 percent while inflation was only 156 percent.) Furthermore, demographic cycles are beyond anyone's realistic control. In order to keep the Social Security Ponzi scheme going without reform, birthrates would have to stay at the highest level of the baby boom—*forever*.

Professor Tobin's best argument is one he makes only implicitly: every generation tends to be richer than its predecessor in the long run, however they stand at any particular moment, so what's wrong with some intergenerational redistribution? We hope America will continue to get richer and richer, although for the past couple of decades the average person of any given age except the elderly has had *less* real after-tax income than his/her predecessors. But do current retirees really want to burden their children, and increase the risk that America's steadily increasing prosperity will end, by refusing to contribute to the solution of our fiscal woes?

Professor Tobin suggests that we move in the next century toward a "funded" Social Security system in which each person's contributions really are saved, invested, and used to pay for his or her own retirement. He is in surprising agreement here with most conservative analysts of Social Security. And it's probably not a bad idea. But, as Professor Tobin concedes, the transition will require one generation of workers to pay for its own retirement and that of its elders at the same time. If today's younger workers are to be that generation, this is one more reason today's retirees should give them a bit of a break.

TNR does not want to abolish Social Security or replace it with welfare handouts. (Nor do we oppose other revenue-raising measures.) Smallish reforms such as full taxation of benefits and reduced indexing could have dramatic fiscal consequences. Kim Davis, an investment banker and TNR subscriber in New York, has another idea. Why shouldn't the excess of people's Social Security benefits over their contributions (including imputed interest) be paid back out of their estates when they die? Security in old age—the program's purpose—would not be affected at all, nor would the benefits of the poor. But working people would no longer, in effect, be subsidizing someone else's inheritance through their FICA tax, as frequently happens today.

We have been banging home the point that Social Security *is* primarily a redistribution scheme, rather than an insurance program, in order to get liberals to evaluate it on its merits, not on its myths. Perhaps it's true that the myths are essential to Social Security's political support—or, to put it more crudely, that we must bribe the middle class in order to preserve a program that also benefits the poor. But fantasy is a decadent basis for any political agenda. And when it stands in the way of even the tiniest reform, it hardly deserves the label "liberal."

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

A Large Life

The German director Margarethe von Trotta, arguably the best filmmaker now at work, has addressed a subject that only an artist of her talent and intellect would attempt. Rosa Luxemburg, as von Trotta knows, had a life so complex that even "print" biographers are challenged by its profusion of ideas, as well as its multiple currents of personal life. For a filmmaker, anything like a full account is impossible. Honor, then, to von Trotta for making *Rosa Luxemburg* as well as she did. I'm not remotely tall enough to pat her on the head, but I know no better way to express admiration for her film, along with reservations, than to say that she has made as good a film on this subject as is imaginable. Other choices were possible from Luxemburg's packed 49-year life, other emphases; each of them could have value in a film, none of them could be complete. From all the possibilities, von Trotta has chosen empathically and generally well.

Rosa Luxemburg
(New Yorker)

Her single most important choice was of Barbara Sukowa to play Luxemburg. Sukowa's excellence is now fixed in the film firmament, through *Lola* and *Berlin Alexanderplatz* for Fassbinder and *Marianne and Juliane* for von Trotta. (A further example of Sukowa's range: she recently played Polly in Giorgio Strehler's production of *The Threepenny Opera* in Paris.) She is ideal for the role in every aspect except one: her looks. Her beauty is deglamorized here, and she uses a touch of Luxemburg's limp, but Luxemburg was a short woman with pronounced Semitic features. Her Jewishness was much less important to her than to her enemies, as a means of vilification; still it is hard to think of her as other than a prototypical turn-of-the-century European Jewish revolutionary. This is an important historical datum, and this Sukowa cannot suggest. In fact, no word about Luxemburg's Jewish background (or that of her lover-colleague Leo Jogiches) is spoken in the film; no Jewish epithet is flung at her, or could credibly be, with Sukowa in the role. I underscore the point because it represents one more hard choice that von Trotta had to make: she had to lose one element in the portrayal to get Sukowa's art for all the rest. (At a Goethe House screening in New York this January, von Trotta mentioned the matter of eliminating Luxemburg's Jewishness—through casting Sukowa—which she decided on because it meant relatively little to Luxemburg herself. Von Trotta added that it was a sensitive decision for a German director.)

Well, then, if unusually stringent selection was imperative for the film, was it worth making? Yes. Despite strictures, the film dramatizes, as no other medium could quite do, a strong woman, a great passion, and an important heroic failure. James Joll wrote recently of Luxemburg: "It is easier to sympathize with unsuccessful revolutionaries than with successful ones. . . . They not only appear as martyrs to the revolutionary cause but also as symbols of a revolution that might have turned out differently." There's an additional point, quite bitter. On the evidence, Luxemburg's failure was very probably inevitable. Brutal though this is to say, her murder in 1919 at least spared her that inevitability.

To the end, she maintained her revolutionary passion, though it was latterly redirected from the German Social Democratic Party to a splinter group first called the Spartacus League, then—over her objections—the German Communist Party. (She wanted no identification with the Russian revolution, which she called "dictatorial.") To the end, she fervently pursued her quest for social justice and affirmed that the working class would rise to fight for that justice. Ferdinand Lassalle, an earlier socialist, said that the working class had driven him to despair with its "damned wantlessness." But Luxemburg retained her faith in the people, her hope, whatever the vocabulary of the hope. Odd as it sounds, Thérèse in Alain Cavalier's film and Luxemburg in von Trotta's seem comparable: two believers in a paradise, against the too-available facts; two believers in the virtues of belief.

Rosa Luxemburg opens with a long shot of a soldier coming toward us over what seems the brow of a hill but turns out to be the roof of a prison in Germany. There, in 1916, Luxemburg is serving a term that runs to the end of the war. From this locus, the story flows back, interweaving time planes in the past, to fill in elements of her life: bits of her childhood in Poland, her return to Poland in 1905 to help the revolution against the czar, her imprisonment in Warsaw. But the main component of the long flashback is her life in Berlin beginning in 1898, her work for the German Social Democratic Party. We see her welcoming Jogiches to Berlin from Zurich in 1899. (He is played optimally, in the role's condensed form, by Daniel Olbrychski.) We see her addressing meetings in Germany and elsewhere; we see her ideological quarrels with her party and with others. In her personal life we see her

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Hollywood Shuffle. Satire about a young black actor's attempts to break into pictures. Some very funny sketches along the way. Co-written and directed by the leading man, Robert Townsend. (Reviewed 5/4/87)

The Secret of My Success. Enjoyable spoof of Horatio Alger. Kansas City youth comes to the Big Apple and takes a big bite. Michael J. Fox is bright, dialogue brighter, direction and editing brightest. (5/11/87)

Prick Up Your Ears. Distinguished writing, directing, acting in this investigation of Joe Orton's life—and of the research for his biography by John Lahr. Memorable. (4/20/87)

Swimming to Cambodia. Jonathan Demme found ingenious simplicities with which to film Spalding Gray's one-man show—about Gray's small role in *The Killing Fields* and what he saw and learned from it. (3/23/87)

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affair with Jogiches fade as she becomes involved with Costia Zetkin, son of the famous Clara Zetkin, who was Luxemburg's friend. All this, and more, is enclosed within the flashback from the German prison. Then, at the war's end, the film goes forward. Luxemburg returns to Berlin when the Social Democrats have only seemingly triumphed. She moves with the Sparticists, including Jogiches and Karl Liebknecht, to control the city boiling with conflict against the Freikorps, the military right. We see the murders of Liebknecht and Luxemburg by the military on the night of January 15, 1919. The last shot is of the Landwehr Canal in Berlin, gleaming and still, after her body has been thrown in and the ripples have disappeared.

Von Trotta's script does as much as it can with the protagonist's character: her womanliness, her love of flowers and animals, her hunger for literature and opera. But the film gives no explanation of the luxurious level on which she and her socialist friends lived. Any preconceptions about garret-and-rags revolutionists are swept aside by these lives—the Biedermeier homes, the sumptuous clothes, the servants. This may puzzle the viewer who doesn't know that, from the time in Zurich when she met her well-to-do fellow-student Jogiches, Luxemburg had few money worries; she also had an allowance from her family in Warsaw, and she was well paid for teaching in the Berlin school of the Social Democrats. As for her friends, it is another historical datum that many 19th-century German socialists came from wealthy families.

The screenplay provides snippets of Luxemburg's ideas. In addition to her belief in the revolutionary potential of the workers, we learn that she is a pacifist and an internationalist. But, among other matters, we don't really understand her coldness toward Edouard Bernstein—which in fact was because she disagreed with his revisionist Marxism—or her arguments with Karl Kautsky over the utility of a general strike. The low point of the film in political terms is the socialists' New Year's Eve Ball of 1900, when Luxemburg presents the newly arrived Jogiches to one luminary after another in a small orgy of revolutionist name-dropping. And a good histrionic opportunity is missed. At the Congress of the Second International in 1904, Jean Jaurès delivered an attack in French on Luxemburg and her friends. Then, for her friends who didn't understand French, Luxemburg rose and delivered his speech in German, with the same verve. What a smashing moment that would have been for Sukowa.

Still it is her performance, so fiery, so *whole*, that convinces us of a complete mind behind the glimpses of ideas that we get. We never feel, as we often do with thinkers in films, that intellectual fragments have been pasted on a dummy. Sukowa's delivery of portions of speeches at meetings, though it confirms yet again that the revolutionists' favorite drug is rhetoric, also substantiates Luxemburg's celebrated forensic power.

Everything cinematic in the film, especially camerawork and design and acting, confirms von Trotta's high stature. Her film cannot fully satisfy those who know Luxemburg or those who do not; still it is so beautifully made that it suggests the very powers it incompletely represents.

MARK STEVENS ON ART

The School of Bloomingdale's

Andy Warhol's bleached face—as memorable as the billboard stare of Dr. Eckleburg in *The Great Gatsby*—presided over his moment; when he died most commentators, with the honorable exceptions of Robert Hughes and Jonathan Yardley, bent the knee. I myself consider Warhol bad news, but can't quite dismiss him. It is too easy to accuse "Andy," as he was known to strangers, of being a glitzy self-promoter, a painter who went to seed, or the end of Western civilization as we know it. In the playing out of his life, there *was* a certain genius. Warhol was a floating, almost immaterial presence, seemingly there and not there, a kind of angel of the zeitgeist. When damning an angel, one should remember to admire the wings.

It is not the painting that matters most about Warhol; but, for the record, his early pop painting was important. Together with the other pop artists, Warhol mixed up art with mass culture, a mix-up that has regularly enriched and exhausted modernism. In the tradition of Braque, Picasso, and Schwitters, who opened art to the street by adding newspaper, bus tickets, and the like to their work, Warhol let the glimmer of the modern media into his art. He fixed our attention on the repetitive, throwaway images among which we spend so much of our lives. He established the objective, iconic power of a Campbell's soup can or a newspaper photograph of a car crash in New Jersey. In doing so, he seemed to slow down mass culture and to speed up art.

Having begun as a commercial artist, he was well positioned to examine the power of the media. At first, there was something impressively precarious in the way he worked the edge between art and commercial design—as if the unexpected union had thrown each off balance. When seen in person, not in reproduction, the early paintings always look surprisingly like paintings. This provocative imbalance between art and the media is lost in the later work. There it no longer matters much that a painting is a painting: the union between art and fashion has become indivisible. The late paintings display a commercial slickness, a sugary appeal, that suited the taste of Warhol's celebrity clients.

Many date this change to 1968, when Warhol was shot by a deranged woman from SCUM (the cheery acronym for the Society for the Cutting Up of Men). It was thought that Warhol then turned more sickly and passive, becoming Andy the media man, celebrity's pet, the founder of *Interview* magazine for whom one star—Mao or Liza Minnelli—or one trademark—the hammer and sickle or the label for Absolut vodka—was very much like another. To say that he sold out, however, is like saying that Picasso painted. Warhol was a master of the trend. Recognizing that art had moved into the mainstream, that the outrage of the avant-garde had become the titillation of fashion, he turned his own celebrity into a performance that brilliantly mirrored certain key contemporary attitudes.

Consider, first, the appearance. It was as unmistakable as a good advertisement. (There's some talk of marketing an Andy doll.) The silver wig and the lost stare, the ghostly way of walking, suggested that he was hardly made of flesh and blood and bone, but was instead a

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kind of human negative, or a human being seen in the afterimage of a camera flash. Reinforcing this image were some of his famous habits. Warhol liked to carry a camera and tape recorder to parties, where he would snap and tape the celebrities. The old ways of conversing, in other words, were no longer quite sufficient. Life was more interesting when mechanically enhanced; small shiny machines could filter the experience of eyes and ears and mouth; recording would supplant memory. The perfect Warhol event would be a party of machines, attached to famous people, interacting with other machines also attached to famous people, before an audience of photographers from the press.

At a party, Warhol was a shiny surface that reflected the goings-on around him. If you asked where the there was there, you seemed to be missing the point: After all, what do two mirrors have to say to each other? He was both audience and star, fawner and fawned upon, leveler and snob. He did not discriminate any more than a mirror would. A mild "Wow" sums up his philosophy of response to others, although he could nonetheless be funny. (I remember his asking Sophia Loren in an interview if, when she played opposite the very short Alan Ladd, she stood in a hole.) In keeping with the philosophy of "Wow," he appeared naive, almost childlike; many people have testified to his sweet, generous nature.

IT STRIKES ME as the most remarkable feature of Warhol, the truly brilliant stroke, that you could not be sure he was kidding. Was he really a sweet naïf? Did he really mean "Wow"? Could a man capable of a great aphorism—"In the future everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes"—really admire those celebrities? Many people have assumed, without thinking about it, that he was performing, that he kept a joker up his sleeve. But there was always genuine doubt, for Warhol seemed to dispense with the ironic distance typical of the camp appreciation of mass culture. He never pretended he was playing a game; or, to put it differently, he never suggested that life was ever anything *but* a game. Perhaps he really, truly believed that life had become television. Perhaps the long-standing quarrel between art and life was now resolved, the two having cohabited long enough to produce the curiously sterile and affectless offspring named Andy. And so he aroused a certain wonder, as if he were the first of a new species: Homo media.

A future historian, if the future has time for history, could do worse than write about "The Age of Warhol." The attitudes Andy personified are some of the most powerful in contemporary culture: the increasingly regressive "Wow" of the mass audience, the related antipathy toward discriminations of value, the interest in fame for fame's sake, the replacement of a felt physicality by a mechanical glimmer, the belief that actions are merely the occasion for style.

If you ask no more of an artist than that he effectively reveal us to ourselves, then you will enjoy Warhol's Andy. If you expect more of an artist, however, if you think, in particular, that art has consequences for the culture at large, then you must denounce the moral vacuity of Warhol. You must worry about a culture that celebrates his beguiling passivity and "Wow" aesthetic. This does not mean, it should be said, that you must advocate a tame, earnest, or moralizing art. There are artists who are most responsible when they are irresponsible—when they dream the illicit dreams, remember the forgotten thoughts, and provide that opening to the gorgeous or the shocking that our imaginations, stifled by the predictability of the daily round, must have to flourish.

What I think essential, however, is that art pay life two compliments. One is the compliment of intensity. Without intensity art merely diminishes life, something life can do very well by itself. The later Warhol was a pale shadow; the most you could say was that he was intense about not being intense. The other compliment art must pay to life is that of difference—of recognizing that not everything is a performance. It impresses me that Warhol's emblematic life was attended by so much violence, real violence. Apart from the attack on Warhol himself, many of the figures who surrounded him at the Factory in the 1960s came to grief. That may be the result, in part, of aestheticizing life too easily—of saying "Wow" instead of discriminating, judging, questioning, helping.

AS IT HAPPENS, two artists who bear importantly upon Warhol—Jasper Johns and David Salle—have recently had shows. Johns exhibited four paintings, *The Seasons,* at the Leo Castelli Gallery; Salle, at the age of 34, was the subject of a retrospective at the Whitney Museum. (His exhibit may now be seen in Los Angeles.) Like Warhol, Johns and Salle have worked with the media-saturated environment, making art that arranges its meanings amid the bland upwelling of labels, clichés, and other visual detritus that suffuses contemporary life. And like Warhol, each has had a prototypical career that seems to define an aspect of success in today's art world.

Salle will usually juxtapose several images—"appropriated," to use the current lingo, from elsewhere—on a large canvas. He will also draw one image on top of another, the effect resembling lines scrawled on a blurry television picture. He often works from photographs projected onto the canvas. Sometimes he will attach an actual object to a painting, which sets up the old "What is illusion? What is reality?" shuffle. The images vary in subject and include cartoon characters, naked women with spread legs, kitschy furniture, and renderings of other art—for example, a quotation from Giacometti or Ribera. It would be a mistake, however, to think that his paintings are "about" Giacometti, or a naked woman.

Salle renders the smudged lens of style, through which our experience of the world is filtered. He portrays the charmless clutter of imagery—borrowed from movies, TV, art, and advertising—that fills the attic above our eyes. He seems particularly interested in the way a commercial artist of the 1950s might have sketched a motel room or a pornographic fantasy. He is part of the large group, in other words, that now considers style—perhaps I should say "the problem of style"—the essential subject. The way we see is what we see. The window owns the view. As a result, the pictures appear immensely self-conscious and have a wan and ghostly look. The naked women have been sapped (some would say deconstructed) of many traditional meanings, leaving behind a sense of husk, of skin, of surface. The drawing is naked, not the woman, and Mickey Mouse counts for as much as Giacometti.

In this context, any commitment to a particular style, a particular truth, appears sentimental. So does any attempt to draw well. Much pride is taken in the drawing's intentional "badness"—as if it brilliantly revealed the character of the subject. This can be a useful strategy only if (as with all important art) the eye stays excited. I can't help but think that the excitement over Salle has more to do with his intentions than with his eye. Warhol recently said, with disarming

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acuity, that his movies were more interesting to talk about than to see. The same is true of Salle's painting. There's too little play in the paint. The composition is magazine slick. The relations of color are dully discordant.

Of course, one may still contemplate the whys and wherefores of Salle's iconography. But the mind grows as weary as the eye. There is a sameness to the art, despite the varied imagery. Unlike the surrealists, whose disjointed imagery was united by the passionate logic of the dream, Salle's arrangements seem jokey or random, the somewhat interesting juxtapositions one finds when watching the evening news, looking through a magazine, or idly fantasizing about a model in an ad. It's hard to care much. Meaningful meaninglessness has become, by now, pretty meaningless.

SOME CRITICS have complained that Salle portrays women in sexually demeaning poses. The work is so diffident, however, that I'm surprised anyone even blinks. Like everything else in his art, the sexual appears filtered through the lens of trivial style; one sees the essence of 1950s advertising in the image of a smiling woman and a pornographic doodle, and one is meant to feel rather depressed about it all. In any case, the paintings, whether or not they include a nude, appear almost interchangeable. They look about as "canned," in other words, as the styles they portray. And, in fact, Salle's work is one of the "trademarks" of the contemporary art world. Few of the collectors who have hastened to purchase his work care which one they get—so long as they get the "look."

The look counts for something. Like a logo, it sticks to the mind, even if no single painting is particularly memorable. Stylishly cool and affectless, the Salle look accurately evokes the downtown sensibility. It gets a certain mix just right. In his painting, for example, there is a vagueness that tends toward gray. It establishes a kind of atmosphere. This gray reminds me of many things that are important now: the ashy urban feel, the hazy "high" fog of deconstructionist prose, the retro "low" nostalgia for the style of the 1950s, when TV was a fuzzy gray. When I see a Salle painting—neon and motel and bubble gum colors glinting against the gray—I think of a hip greasy spoon (there should be some bubble gum stuck under the counter) at which artists talk about Derrida and "Leave It to Beaver." Somebody brings up the old *Life* magazine. Wow—imagine calling life a magazine.

IT WAS Jasper Johns who staked out the territory in which Warhol and Salle have worked. There has been no artist more self-conscious, no artist who has studied visual commonplaces with more determination. In the 1950s, Johns stripped the familiar context from popular icons and styles—most famously, the American flag. In doing so, he stripped them of their blinding familiarity. In giving popular icons a new nakedness, he brought something bracing and chilly and empty into American art. Yet his work differs in important respects from that of Warhol and Salle.

In the first place, he has much greater gifts. His color and composition repay study; his brush stroke is richly evocative. Although Johns abstained from the earnest feeling of the abstract expressionists, he retained a slow, paint-loving touch that owes something to Philip Guston. This enriches his work with paradox. He is both cool and warm, a cool mind with a warm touch. In the second place, Johns has always infused his imagery, however simple or pop it might appear, with a density of meaning well beyond the powers of Warhol and Salle.

In *The Seasons* Johns has painted four pictures called "Spring," "Summer," "Fall," and "Winter." The cycle has an autobiographical aura; it suggests the seasons of a life. In each painting there is the shadowlike shape of a man. ("Spring" also includes the shadow of a child; "Fall" has two shadows.) Each shadow is placed in a roughly rectangular form, separating it somewhat from an untidy assemblage of fascinating visual riffraff. This collection of riffraff is roped—more or less firmly depending upon the picture—to a ladder. The ladder, which rests in a rough way on its side, appears broken in "Fall." In "Winter" the ladder is not fixed, but the broken pieces are firmly tied together.

Much of the material Johns has worked and reworked over the years is included in the riffraff: the American flag, the Mona Lisa, the crosshatching, and so on. Each picture presents these elements differently. To a certain extent we can "read" a life story into the evolution of this private iconography. For example, we are reminded of the passage of time when we see the clocklike semi-

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circle whose position changes in each painting. (The semicircle, incidentally, is not roped into the bundle.) We can guess that the famous visual pun—is it a vase or two people in a profile?—that appears most noticeably in "Spring" would have bewitched a child. Especially a child who would become an artist like Johns, expert in the tricks of meaning.

We wonder if, in "Winter," the artist put in a simple and childish image of a snowman, painted in jolly black and white, to serve as an absurdist counterpoint to the ashes-and-snow bleakness in the painting. Thoughts of death and childhood, after all, often join together in the winter of life. Did the artist intend to "rhyme" the snowman with the cheerful child's drawing in "Spring"? There are dozens of such clues, to be turned over but not solved, in this cycle. That is part of their appeal. Perhaps Johns is referring to something in his life when he portrays a snapped ladder in "Fall." Perhaps not.

There is no reason to pin down the facts, for who can fully know another? Or want to? This self-portrait in shadow, if it is a self-portrait in shadow, provides a questing sort of pleasure. In Johns's ambiguity, in the knowing, the not knowing, the almost knowing, there has always been something erotic—a kind of tease. The slowness with which he works, the steady accretion of detail, the working up of the brush stroke, even the wax-based encaustic he favors, endow thought itself with the "thickness" of physical sensation. More than any other contemporary painter, Johns portrays the look, the space, the happenstance of thought.

IT'S BEEN SAID that Andy Warhol took an interest in the homeless. This seems apt, not just because he was kind-hearted or interested in the most celebrated of current causes, but because he and his art seem no less homeless. Warhol appeared to live at parties, and the images with which both he and Salle worked have a drifting, nomadic presence. Such artists approach tradition as something to be widely quoted, not possessed or earned or challenged. The world is a Bloomingdale's of images, among which one poses and shops. A little angst is added for flavor.

This may be an accurate reflection of the way we see today; but the era, in art, does not justify the means. Johns also works with "homeless" images—while enriching them. Having stripped certain images of their traditional context, he has taken care to reclothe them with many-shaded meanings. If Warhol and Salle empty and subtract, he fills and adds. He throws away nothing and makes the simple pleasingly complex. His paintings trade in memory, not nostalgia. I don't mean to suggest that Johns is a sentimental philanthropist. There's more than enough ice in his art. But he has taken possession of, and responsibility for, his imagery. By working and reworking, he has made a kind of haphazard home out of the riffraff. The recent cycle of paintings reminds me of Beckett, whom Johns admires. The man-shadow of the paintings, surrounded by the roped-together accumulation of years, is not unlike a lost character who carries his home around in a bundle. This character, when he pokes through the bundle, finds, loses, and rediscovers. Every time Johns looks at something, it both changes a little and stays the same.

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Persons and Places: Fragments of Autobiography by George Santayana edited by William G. Holzberger and Herman J. Saatkamp Jr.

(MIT Press, 761 pp., $35)

George Santayana: A Biography by John McCormick

(Knopf, 612 pp., $30)

George Santayana may at last be emerging from a long period of unsalutary neglect, if these two books turn out to be straws in the critical wind. Santayana has never been without his acolytes, but the beautiful writer who charmed and needled his contemporaries, challenged a whole set of philosophical, religious, and political orthodoxies, and inspired one of Wallace Stevens's noblest poems, "To an Old Philosopher in Rome," is only a name to the general reader. It is to be hoped that the forthcoming MIT edition of his complete works will help to change all that.

Persons and Places, Santayana's three-part autobiography, and the first of MIT's planned 19 volumes, was originally published in sections—the first in 1944, the last in 1953, one year after his death. Now impeccably edited and embellished by rare photographs, its omitted passages and marginal headings restored, and superbly introduced by Richard Lyon, it appears in the one-volume form in which Santayana intended it be read. And what he left out by design or simply forgot is supplied by John McCormick in the fullest and most informed biography of Santayana to date.

Even with these volumes, though, it's still not easy to grasp the protean author concealed in the luxuriant foliage of his works. Those works range across a wide area of genres and categories—poetry, aesthetic treatises, literary criticism, cultural and social commentary, fiction, Platonic dialogues, political disquisitions, autobiography—all marked by a learning, acuteness, vivacity, and stylistic felicity rarely encountered in our jargon-ridden days, and all feeding into the mainstream of a humanist philosophy. Santayana wasn't a system builder. Nor do his pages, in Wallace Stevens's words, "offer themselves for sensational summary."

Still, from his sonnet sequences (1883-1904) through *The Sense of Beauty* (1896), *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900), *The Life of Reason* (1905-06), and *Skepticism and Animal Faith* (1923), to the culminating four-volume *The Realms of Being* (1927-40), Santayana addressed himself to a central issue: the relation between man and the universe. To dissolve old antinomies, he would, as McCormick puts it, "keep together mind and body, and simultaneously marry a theory of the ideal to an unyielding belief in the primacy of matter"—an aim, needless to

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say, uncongenial to both the transcendentalist and the positivist.

One can only speculate on the connections between Santayana's personal history and his materialistic idealism. Outwardly his life, if initially traumatic, was placid enough. His Spanish mother had married a Bostonian, George Sturgis, while residing in the Philippines. Left with three children after her husband's death in 1857, she removed to the Boston of his family until 1862 when, during a visit to Spain, she married Augustín Ruiz de Santayana. George, born in Avila in 1863, was the only issue of that union. Five years later, his mother returned to Boston with her Sturgis children, leaving George in the care of his gentle and free-thinking father. He lived in Avila for eight years. Then his father took him to Boston, and after a short interval went back to Spain. Santayana's adjustment to his new surroundings; his responses to his half brother and half sisters and to his Sturgis relatives; his years at the Boston Latin School and at Harvard College, from which he graduated in 1886; his trips to Europe, where he re-established ties with his father and pursued his postgraduate studies in philosophy; his brilliant career in a distinguished Harvard department from 1894 until he left the United States in 1912; and the ensuing 40 years in England and on the Continent—all are engagingly recounted in his memoirs, but with significant omissions.

IT ALMOST SEEMS as if his candor, the charm of his style, the very volubility of his disclosures, were calculated to mislead investigators of his private history. He wanted his memoirs ("rambling recollections," Lyon aptly calls them) to be read as a mix of "satire and gossip," not as "confessions"; posterity would have to judge him by his other books, by the legitimacy of his sentiments and ideas. And that is precisely the way he is judged in McCormick's fine new biography. The biographer supplements his running elucidations ("ruthless" summaries, he calls them) of Santayana's invitingly quotable books with extracts from unpublished letters, essays, and marginalia that tell of episodes and convey opinions unmentioned or only hinted at in the memoirs. Thus a new and more vulnerable Santayana peers out from behind the suave, ironic autobiographer who achieved his serenity at some emotional cost. No other study of Santayana blends so perceptively the facts of his life with his intellectual divagations.

Santayana described *Persons and Places* as a "retrospective voyage." The metaphor is more than a cliché. He once claimed Hermes as his patron god; it might just as well have been Poseidon, for he was an oceanic traveler in both his literal and his mental migrations. Between 1872, when he was uprooted from his Spanish homeland, and 1912, when he quit the American shore for good, he crossed the Atlantic 38 times. Age, not to mention two world wars, slowed down his comings and goings but did not deter his intellectual forays. Travel fortified his skepticism, kept his mind flexible and open to new ideas, taught him, he said, to "forgive the world everything except the ignorance of thinking its conditions alone possible or alone right." It also corroborated his view of existence as an "endless flux" beyond human control, and prompted an aloofness to events "mechanically produced" and irremediable. "It is better to put up with things," he advised, "than to be responsible for them."

The voyager's strategy was to stay unattached in his "cockle-shell," but to make himself comfortable wherever he found anchorage, to respect the mutability of friendship, and to "maintain the dignity of a guest." The wandering "visitor" cherished solitude too deeply to immerse himself in the "inhuman" world, and he died, appropriately enough, at the convent-clinic of the Blue Sisters in Rome. Nature, he wrote, "framed me for a recluse." Yet the earth, if "a barren, treacherous and intractable waste for mankind," was also "tempting and beautiful and swarming with primitive animals not possible to tame but sometimes good to eat" and "possible to exploit."

Such sentiments come curiously from one who confessed that he had "never been adventurous" and needed quiet in order to feel free, but there was something of the adventurer in his nature. The quiet man relished tales of rascals whose "impudence" and "knowledge of things" appealed to his mocking spirit, and whose indifference to pain and tragedy matched his own.

This isn't to say that he was a covert picaro, a Sinbad the Sailor or a Felix Krull—only that he made the most of his brains and connections, and usually landed on his feet. He was never really poor, despite his frequent references to family "poverty" (at worst it was a genteel deprivation) during his precollege years, but he appreciated the efficacy of money—"the petrol of life," he once called it—without ever wishing to emulate the men who devoted their lives to making it. Young Santayana felt no qualms about sponging off his rich friends. "I don't find poverty at all a burden," he wrote to a college classmate, "but rather a stimulant. Besides I sponge systematically and on principle, not feeling my dignity compromised thereby any more than if I were a monk or a soldier." There is nothing cynical in that declaration; he repaid material debts in a different tender. After he had acquired a comfortable competence, he gave away large sums, often secretly.

All the same, Santayana doesn't seem to have reflected on the sheer amount of intangible privilege and material prosperity that it took to live unencumbered by possessions in clean, well-lighted places high above the muck of the world. He rode on the destructive element like a cork. Even his admirers were sometimes chilled by his avoidance of "human contagion," and by his apparent

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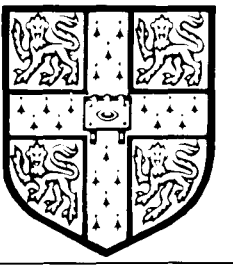

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imperviousness to suffering—a charge he took seriously, and rejected. He wasn't heartless in his personal relations, but neither was he given to brooding over catastrophe. From "a broad cosmic view," he wrote, "destruction is only the shady side of progress. Like natural death it is inevitable; and though we regret it when premature or needlessly painful, there would be as much sentimental folly in disallowing it as in mourning the coming on of night or of autumn."

Such conclusions followed logically from a Lucretian belief in nature's inexorable and impersonal processes. They might also have sprung, McCormick surmises, from a selfish wish to remain uninvolved in sticky social issues. Santayana couldn't ignore political and social upheavals or devastating wars. They saddened as much as they inconvenienced him. But the "genuine skeptic" refused to take sides in the cat-and-dog rivalry of contesting ideas—communism, fascism, liberalism. Each was "capable of prevailing in the world." He had more positive things to say about his blessed triad—tradition, authority, order—and about the kinds of society most conducive to "organized, harmonious, and consecrated living" and to the unconfined freedom of the mind. Wars, "furious factions," above all anarchy in any form constituted the great threat to "well-ordered polity." Like Ortega y Gasset, he appreciated the fragility of civilization, and condemned the presumptions of rabid egalitarians oblivious to the immense and painful efforts it took to create it. Unlike Ortega, however, his passion for order on occasion led him, McCormick notes, "to see 'Order' where other observers saw criminal usurpation and abuse."

FOR REASONS not entirely clear, I suspect even to Santayana himself, he identified the "Jewish spirit" as one of the disorganizing tendencies in modern life. McCormick finds this strain of thinking aberrant, "unworthy," indeed "scarcely comprehensible" in the author of *The Life of Reason* and *Realms of Being*, but he doesn't fudge its implications. It derived in part, he suggests, from Santayana's exposure to the Roman Catholic catechism and to the anti-Semitic attitudes prevalent in the English and American upper classes.

Until the 1930s his guarded aspersions tended to be more flip than rancorous. He had evidently thought a good deal about the Jews and their place in history. He revered Spinoza and approved of austere Talmudic intellectuals absorbed in the affairs of the mind and unsullied by commerce. For their worldly antitypes, the German and American magnates who "tried to masquerade as gentiles," he had only contempt:

> They had no roots in the earth, in the race, in the traditions, or in the religion of their countries. They were surface phenomena, as are actors, professors, critics, journalists. While they remained humble artisans or solitary thinkers, like Spinoza, they could live content and blameless in the crevices of the Christian edifice; but when they grew mighty, they could only hasten its ruin, and the ruin of their own power over it.

By the 1940s Santayana had come to dote on the scurrilities of Céline, and to express in private letters his annoyance with Jewish upstarts—he charged them with taking over and manipulating the literature, arts, and sciences of their host countries—and with quarrelsome messianic Jewish radicals. McCormick offers evidence (an unpublished "surreal" and self-defensive sketch for a film or a play cryptically entitled "A Preface Which May, or May Not, Be Projected") to suggest that as late as 1950 Santayana was trying to exorcise his bias, but he feels obliged to conclude stiffly that "Santayana's anti-Semitism reveals an astonishing failure of the imagination and either willful disregard of fact or willful ignorance."

At Harvard, where Jews were few and conventional anti-Semitism was the rule, Santayana had shown no overt signs of this antipathy. He, too, had felt incurably foreign and stood out, McCormick happily puts it, as "a ripe mango among Jonathan apples." His Boston ties, however, enabled him to pass into an inner society from which his Jewish and Irish-Catholic classmates and students were barred, and to mask his feelings of marginality by taking part in socially prestigious activities, such as acting in Hasty Pudding shows and contributing to the *Lampoon*. At the same time, he was getting much more out of his courses than he indicated. In trivializing this period as years of "spiritual penury and moral confusion" and deprecating his education in the manner of Henry Adams, he was being unfair to himself and to his college.

The autobiographer of *Persons and Places* depicts the Harvard student and teacher as an exile, or as a kind of Spanish spy. Eventually he challenges the "influential persons" by writing pessimistic verses, by "being indiscernibly a Catholic or an atheist," by attacking Robert Browning, by ducking his administrative duties, by choosing the company of rich, happy-go-lucky undergraduates over that of the "intelligentsia." Played down or omitted are the stages of his intellectual maturation and the unsingularity of his poses and tastes. Others besides himself rebuked the Philistines and swore by Ruskin, Arnold, and Schopenhauer. In short, he was never more "American" than when he capitalized on his exotic origins, sported a cape, and with kindred spirits rejected vulgar materialism, the machine, and the mob.

THUS HIS decision to give up teaching and strike out for Europe—a move possibly hastened by the retirement of William James, the death of his mother, and the assurance of a modest legacy—wasn't a sudden impulse. It was the long-planned scheme of a would-be expatriate. And it may have been fathered as well by a motive unrecorded in his memoirs. Daniel Cory, Santayana's protégé and secretary, reports his remark that in his Harvard days he must have been an unconscious homosexual, and that others "must have suspected something unusual in his make-up." His awareness of this silent disapproval, he told Cory, was one of the reasons he decided to leave. (McCormick has other explanations for but no doubts about Santayana's more than "unconscious" homosexuality—certainly latent, possibly overt.)

Whatever prompted him to go, America looked at from Europe grew increasingly shadowy for Santayana as fact and loomed larger as idea. He had never known, he later confessed, "the deeper layers and broad currents of American life." His knowledge of the United States during his residence there had been confined mainly to "Harvard College, a part of Boston, an occasional glimpse of New York." Not surprisingly, his account of American society and the American mind was partial and opinionated. Once out of Yankeeland and free to indulge pent-up irritations, he had many pungent things to say about the New England in which, by his own account, he had been so long incarcerated.

The animadversions in *Persons and Places* are satirical, funny, and good-humoredly malicious. Santayana's Catholic sensibility suffocates in the Protes-

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tant milieu, as he disdainfully observes a half-formed society "groping after its essence." His Boston is a "moral and intellectual nursery, always busy applying first principles to trifles." He associates it with abandoned spinsters, a feeble and complacent religiosity, and hollow moralizing. Fortunately a "cultivated inner circle" provides an oasis in the Unitarian Sahara. Its members—a select society "not haunted as yet by the specter of decline, of war, of poverty, of a universal bureaucracy, and of a vulgar intelligentsia"—share his interest in "poetry and art, religion also . . . sport, fashionable society and travel, good wine and good books." This conservative Europeanized set has managed to retain some of the vitality and simplicity of antebellum Boston and stands in marked contrast to the washed-out scions of the old merchant gentry, who aren't hard or crude enough to survive in the era of big business, who rot before they can ripen, and who strike him as "confused, amateurish, out-of-focus, and violently useless."

THE LAST PURITAN, a fictional meditation on the Boston-Cambridge ambience of Santayana's youth and its "agonized conscience," is his most widely read statement about this group of fin-de-siècle Harvardians, civilized and gifted but of no use to the world. McCormick's chapter on Santayana's novel traces its slow exfoliation from the seedbed of memory and experience. Oliver Alden (the name is a composite of Cromwell and the irresolute hero of Longfellow's poem) "peters out," like other members of Santayana's doomed generation, because he can neither capitulate to the prevailing values nor muster enough strength or courage or intelligence to break out of his "spiritual vacuum." His tragedy, as explained by Santayana, lies in the fact that "he was superior to the world, but not up to his own standard"—and that he knew it. A throwback to his Puritan forebears and carrying a heavy load of duty, he lacks, like Melville's Ahab, "the low enjoying power." "Touched with divine consecration," he dies a martyr to his unlivable ideals. Santayana used the occasion of the novel to expound his anti-Puritan brand of regimented hedonism, but he recognized elements of Oliver in himself and confessed admiration, "even envy," for his hero. *The Last Puritan* is an affectionate brickbat tossed at the country he had been delighted to leave.

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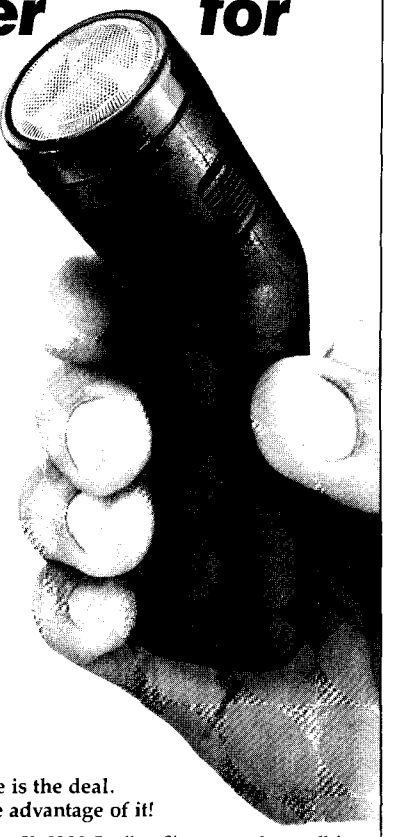

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dent than in his various disquisitions on the American "genteel tradition," a term he coined in 1913 (in *Winds of Doctrine*) that was to gain wide currency after the publication of *Character and Opinion in the United States* (1920) and *The Genteel Tradition at Bay* (1931). It referred particularly to an inherited intellectual tradition, literary and religious, totally out of keeping with the realities of American life, and to its priestly preservers. The discrepancy between American ideals and practices is pinpointed in a much quoted sentence: "The American Will inhabits the skyscraper; the American Intellect inhabits the colonial mansion." Santayana was saying, in effect, that the highbrows were flogging a dead horse. "Old genteel America," handicapped by its "meagerness of soul, thinness of temper and its paucity of talent, and constitutionally unhappy," had nothing in common with the hearty, playful, animal America of jazz bands, football games, and "cheerful funerals." This was the real America he enjoyed and ridiculed, the "trunk" of the nation sundered from its "head," a society fatiguing but less obnoxious to him than its bloodless appendage.

Santayana's condescending comments on the derivative and sapless culture of the gentility, and his contemptuous references to the "intelligentsia" and "professors," anticipated fiercer assaults by others in the years ahead, but they also blurred his not so distant cousinship with the objects of his satire. Admittedly, the now generally forgotten guardians of culture were in most respects his opposites, although not all of them were quite so straight-laced, parochial, conventionally religious, and sexually innocent as he and others made them out to be. It would be hard to imagine any one of them writing the extraordinary letter to a classmate that McCormick quotes, in which the 24-year-old Santayana lists his sexual options (wet dreams, masturbation, pederasty, whores, seductions and mistresses, marriage); or acknowledging the divinity of the "Dionysiac inspiration"; or espousing Santayana's particular strain of philosophical materialism.

But something of their Boston tone can be heard in his dismissal of those ill-educated "specialists" of the Academy who "by sheer effrontery make themselves tyrants in their respective fields," and in his remarks on the young rebels of the '20s ("too much freedom, too much empty space, too much practice in being spontaneous when there was nothing in them to bubble"), and in his dig at the Lawrences and the Gides, who had "openly and conscientiously written down robbery, murder, adultery, and sodomy among the unalienable rights of man." He stuck to his Tocquevillian conviction: "Culture if profound and noble must remain rare; if common it must become mean."

At first glance, Santayana's critique of America and its culture might be taken as merely another clever and trenchant put-down, similar in spirit to the overviews of European visitors who came to sneer and found America wanting in all the essentials that make life endurable. But the cosmopolite was less unsympathetic and less detached than he appeared to be. His superciliousness was not only self-protective; it also served to conceal the intensity of his off-and-on quarrel with the "place" he held responsible for disinheriting him morally from his Spanish birthright. No indifferent outsider would have sustained the quarrel over such a long period. McCormick thinks that Santayana belongs outside "a predominantly American tradition," and that to place him in it "would violate his thought and work."

I THINK that America represented for Santayana a part of the truth. He relied on its realities to counteract what he called his "umbilical contemplations," to keep him from floating off to an "imaginary Atlantis." From the very American philosopher William James he acquired, he says, "a sense for the immediate, unexplained, instant fact of experience." In Emerson (the one American writer, with the possible exception of Whitman, he seems to have known really well, and with whom he carried on an extended debate) he found support for his belief that nature could not be apprehended directly, but only through symbols and visible signs.

Had he read with any attention the American writers he belittled or glancingly referred to or failed to mention at all—Hawthorne, Thoreau, Poe, Melville, Henry James, Edith Wharton, to name a few—he might have discovered unsuspected affinities between himself and these literary pilgrims who had gone off on real or imaginary voyages. Since the early 19th century, Europe had been a way station for them, a necessary stopping point in their spiritual itineraries—but seldom "home." For Santayana, the case was reversed. "Home," if anywhere, meant Europe; the United States was his catalyst and adversary, but was indispensable to his development. Although "outside" the American tradition, he remained a part of it, no matter how persistently he denied the relationship.

The ideal society for this self-styled "high Tory" had disappeared forever with the early Greeks. He would have been happiest, he said many times, living under a system "essentially idle, aristocratic, and contemplative—in a word, utterly un-American," but he was too sensible of the dynamics of change to hunger for the irrecoverable. Obviously, he could never feel at home in a country whose culture he arbitrarily split into antithetical components, one borrowed and desiccated, the other crude and adolescent. Yet he watched with keen interest the fortunes of a republic still, by his cultural measurements, in its swaddling clothes—not yet fully conscious of its capacities for good and ill but already

LOTTO

It's an act not a prayer the prophet
Calls the world to. The calendulas
Are burnt enough already from the fever

On the street where traffic slows, shoulders
Out of cars, exchanging dreambook dreams
Mama knows the numbers of. You can divide

Or add: it depends on what you like, man,
The combinations, or the feel. The sounds
Should be on key, for instance, at tickwatch

Intervals, or echoing the refrigerator's hum.
And sometimes a beat should catch up and lap
The other, breaking stride. In the pony kegs

That smell of Lysol, sweet pastry's wrapped
To keep the night. "Baklava"—a good word
Seeped in nuts and dipped in honey. Three sounds

Three souls—you can save for later: what comes due
Tomorrow's a ticket in your pocket, if you spend,
If you waste, if you play the feeling now.

MAUREEN BLOOMFIELD

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an economic and political force.

Santayana had rather fixed notions about national character. "Americans," as distinguished from their pale intellectual spokesmen, tended to be energetic, good-humored, innocent, generous, and technically competent—traits that boded well for the future of the nation. At the same time, they lacked historical memory, and were glad rather than "ashamed of having always to begin afresh." They wanted to foist their own democratic tradition on older ones and to refashion "all human souls" after their own image. Trusting fondly in a benign destiny, they went about "daily building faith over a sleeping volcano"; committed the preservation of intellectual independence and "moral initiative" to a second-rate body of teachers, clergymen, poets, and artists; and concentrated on the "multiplication of mechanisms."

Luckily America was "full of mitigations of Americanism." Santayana saw auspicious signs in its institutions, "jumbled and limping" and untransplantable though they were, and took special note of the American spirit of "free individuality" and "free cooperation," by-products of historical circumstance, perhaps, and imperfect and self-serving in their operation, but still safer props for a world order than organized fanaticisms. In the end, he would settle for American dullness rather than suffer through religious and political despotisms. By the close of the Second World War, he was half-persuaded that the United States had the power and techniques to stabilize the international economy. So long as it refrained from interfering with the "peace and liberty" of its neighbors, it might become "the secular arm of Reason in checking unreason" and provide the world with what it most needed: "not a religion with a militant mission," but a government "to serve and keep order, not to dominate where it has no moral roots."

CHARACTERISTICALLY, Santayana didn't allow his hopes to overshoot possibility. He had great respect for limits and boundaries, great distrust for utopian thinking in any form. He remained a skeptical spectator rather than an activist, on the grounds that the philosopher's business was not to change the world but to aspire to self-discipline and inner harmony. Edmund Wilson wasn't the first to sense something unpleasant in this detachment, achieved in part, he thought, by Santayana's avoiding "indiscriminate human relationships." Santayana seems too snugly ensconced in the churning universe, his affections too narrowly circumscribed. And yet his lifelong pursuit of the truth, and his adherence to unpopular doctrines, qualify this imputation. A social and moral purport is latent in everything he wrote. He instructed as he entertained.

Santayana's critics have felt uncomfortable with his ideas, his personality, his literary style. For a philosopher he wrote indecently well, incurring suspicion by the very felicity of his language. Sometimes the manner and tone of his beguiling sentences do seem to vitiate their substance; nor does it extenuate his mean and feline prejudices to say that they could be amusingly couched. Such reservations, however, don't apply to his conservatism, deep and abiding and often offensive to liberal minds, but seriously argued and free of cant. Unlike many of the misnamed "conservatives" of today, ignorant of their ignorance, he was alert to valid arguments in ideas and programs at odds with his own.

He deserves to be read in the same open-minded spirit in which William James read him. There was much in Santayana's attitudes and thought that was uncongenial to James, yet he "literally squealed with delight" at the "imperturbable perfection" with which his younger colleague—and "with so impudently superior an air"—challenged the Harvard consensus. "Truth," Santayana once remarked, "is only believed when someone has invented it well." How his ideas and intuitions will come to be rated by professional philosophers remains to be seen, but the "inventions" of this exact and elegant writer and master of epigram, whether believed or not, assure him a high place in American thought and letters.

DANIEL AARON

Daniel Aaron is professor emeritus of English at Harvard University and president of the Library of America.

ACTIVISM 101

A Sport of Nature by Nadine Gordimer

(Knopf, 341 pp., $18.95)

There has been a rather narcissistic focus in recent years, by both the white South African literati (Nadine Gordimer included) and the foreign press, on the importance of white involvement in the emancipation of the oppressed black majority in South Africa. Such paternalistic posturing has glossed over the complexities of the internal reality there and downplayed the role of black South Africans in the achievement of their own independence. Now, as if in response to her own previous work and to the work of others, Gordimer has written a mock history of South Africa's liberation from apartheid—which here happens virtually overnight, on page 337—as if it were the story of the rise of one self-absorbed white woman to greatness.

In preceding novels Gordimer has charted the evolution of the white liberal consciousness in South Africa to its hypothetical end. Her heroines have either made peace with their limited ability to effect change (Rosa Burger in *Burger's Daughter*: "teaching them to walk again, at Baragwanath Hospital. They put one foot before the other") or they've run away (Maureen Smales in *July's People*). Gordimer's new novel begins where these works leave off. "It will take another kind of being to stay on, here," one character declares somberly, "a new white person. Not us. The chance is a wild chance—like falling in love." *A Sport of Nature* glorifies this "new white person," a person for whom *everything* is "a wild chance," a person whose political purpose is dependent on whom she happens to be sleeping with at the time, a person who becomes very famous by doing very little.

This is a book about the fiction that surrounds fame, or, more accurately, the often undeserved fame of fiction; it is about political naïveté, about looking at the world through rose-colored glasses. And it is Gordimer's most deeply cynical novel.

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But Gordimer's tone is so deceptively manipulative that even her publicist has been taken in. Appropriately, and ironically, the book's own dust jacket is inflationary, boasting that *A Sport of Nature* is Gordimer's "largest, most reverberant work." In some sense this is true: it transcends the bounds of her past novels not only in place (its heroine's travels span the globe) but in time (it begins in the South Africa of the 1960s and ends in an imaginary future free from racial strife). Attempting to snag the would-be reader with such teasers as, "Is she an innocent, grasping for survival, or a seeker after power . . . ?" publicity for the book moves her work, as Gordimer moves her heroine, into the realm of popular, blockbuster, Book-of-the-Month Club fiction.

In a way, *A Sport of Nature* fits quite comfortably into this milieu. It lacks the lyricism and emotional concentration of much of Gordimer's earlier work. But Gordimer may well have the last laugh: for the very preposterousness of her heroine's celebrity is the point here. The narrative mode is pseudo-documentary: Gordimer's historian/narrator tries to piece together—from letters, recorded interviews, newspaper clippings, photographs, reference book citations, and hearsay—the motivating factors of a life that is essentially motiveless.

UNLIKE Gordimer's other heroines, heirs to their parents' failed political struggles and impelled by their predetermined places in history, Hillela Capran is a "spontaneous mutation," "without a past before yesterday and a future beyond tomorrow." Her mother, Ruthie, runs off with a Portuguese dancer when Hillela is too young to remember her, and after a brief stint on the road with her traveling salesman father (who she doubts actually *is* her father), Hillela is brought up by her mother's sisters. Her first "revolutionary" activity—described as if it were a coup d'état, a usurpation of the white liberal establishment in South Africa (here represented by Hillela's leftist aunt, Pauline, and her civil rights lawyer husband, Joe)—is an affair with her cousin and surrogate brother, Sasha, a transgression that forces her out on her own, on what turns out to be the yellow-brick road to political prominence.

Rosa Burger, who makes a brief cameo appearance toward the beginning of *A Sport of Nature*, haunts this novel as the political and historical consciousness, however ineffectual, that Hillela doesn't have. Rosa will forever be "Burger's daughter," defined by her father's unfulfilled hopes for South African unity. Hillela takes her parents where she finds them. She is "like a daughter" to relatives and lovers and passing ideologies alike. Amoral, irreligious, apolitical, Hillela is without convictions or ambitions. She exists in a vacuum:

> On the bare boards of this no-place, no-time, she was an assertion of the *here* and *now* in the provisionality of exile, whose inhabitants are strung between the rejected past and a future fashioned like a paper airplane out of manifestos and declarations.

But Hillela is not asexual. "Moved on" (as the narrator describes the acceleration of her political momentum) by the men in her life, she is a purely sexual being. "Those others . . . have no home," she writes in one of the first-person epistles that punctuate this overblown canonization, "because they are brave and believe in the other kinds of love, justice, fellow man—and inside each other, making love, that's the only place we can make, here, that's not just a place to stay." This sort of saccharine vapidity issuing from Hillela is privileged by the narrator to the point of parody:

> Bradley Burns, who is given to quiet analysis of the time when he was the man in a position to know, says she confused him. Deliberately. At times it was clear that for her only sexual love . . . was to be trusted. All the rest (his phrase) was shit and lies. . . . Then at other times she could also say love "can't be got away with"; or it wasn't "enough."

Soap operas have better lines than these.

Still the narrator portrays Hillela as deserving of idolatry, mentioning her in the same breath with Christ and Shakespeare. The weightiness of the tone is broadly comedic: "Christa Zeederburg, urged to reminisce at the end of her life, never forgot the safety pin [that held together the waistband of Hillela's jeans]." And after almost 200 pages of commentary on Hillela's individuality and monumental importance, Gordimer's narrator lets slip: "It is easy . . . to confuse Hillela with someone else."

Hillela begins her "brilliant career" with a series of meaningless odd jobs and sexual exploits, which the narrator feels compelled to inflate (in less than compelling fashion) into a sprawling, picaresque odyssey. When the apartment of the subversive journalist with whom she has been living is ransacked (they met at the advertising agency where she "carried copy about and opened bottles of white wine"), they both flee South Africa to Tamarisk Beach in East Africa, where he eventually abandons her. It is only through his actions, then, and her single-minded devotion to him, that she becomes a political refugee.

THE "MOMENT" toward which the narrator insists Hillela's life is "always moving"—the moment of black majority rule in South Africa—is arrived at in a similarly random way. When, having been spirited away from a curio shop where she worked as a clerk, Hillela is employed as a governess and social secretary in an ambassador's household (becoming the ambassador's mistress in the bargain), she goes wherever the ambassador and his family are posted; and when she collides with and marries Whaila Kgomani, a black South African revolutionary with the ANC, she exhibits the same passivity: "Where Hillela appears next, of course, is where her husband was sent"; "As Whaila . . . assumed her loyalty to the cause, this became assumed by her as the reason for her presence"; "She did what she had learned to do all her life—assumed instinctively from observance of those with whom she lived the appropriate attitude."

Like the "revolutionary woman" of Sheila Fugard's 1985 novel of the same name, Hillela is, if anything, anti-revolutionary. She is not a "navigator of the world's courses"—this is left to men—but a highly impressionable sexual object. "If things had turned out differently," a friend suggests, "she was the type to have become a terrorist, a hijacker."

But when Whaila, a key figure in the planning of armed infiltration, is assassinated, the narrator seizes on what she (or he) believes to be a turning point in Hillela's life: the realization that Whaila's death "belongs to tragedy, not grief." "A tragedy," someone had once explained to Hillela, "is when a human being is destroyed engaging himself with events greater than personal relationships. . . . A tragic death results from the struggle between good and evil. And it has results that outlast grief. Grief is a rot, it belongs with the dead, but tragedy is a sign that that struggle must go on." Activism 101. Yet despite this impassioned politics, the real struggle for Hillela—which takes her to London, Eastern Europe, and

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the United States—is still "the struggle in bed."

Eventually she marries Reuel, a black general in the process of launching his second coup to return the unnamed West African country of his birth to civilian rule. As a result, Hillela is "taken" everywhere:

> Her sexuality, evident to every man watching her pass as he sat in the bush oiling his gun, or stood at attention for review before the General, was part of the General's Command. For him it seemed to grow, to be revealed with the success of his push toward the real capital.

Reuel gives her an African name: Chiemeka (a "female version" of his own name). She hugs him: "The shine of her one cheekbone was impressed with the ridges of the insignia he bore."

Yet, operating on the theory that information about Hillela's life has been lost or suppressed, the narrator seems to feel that any impression that Hillela has played a subordinate role is erroneous:

> It has never been clear what her position with the African National Congress was, beyond that of Whaila Kgomani's widow, at that period. And the uncertainty of future political alliances between countries makes it always wiser for references other than "she played her role in active support of her husband's determination to restore peace, prosperity, and justice to his country" to be excluded from data available at the General's Ministry of Information and Public Relations.

The truth of the matter is that there is no information to the contrary. Even some of Hillela's own statements about the momentous occasions in her life are apocryphal.

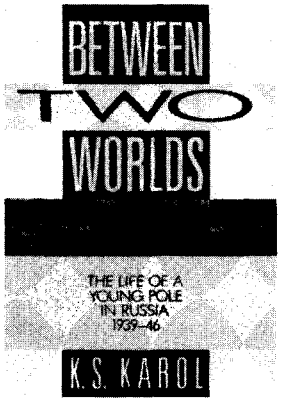
When Reuel finally retakes his country—although the "official story" is one of liberation, of democracy and prosperity—he establishes a one-party state. A taxidermist's leopard stands at the entrance to the State House as "the leopard of black independence"; there are still designated Enemies of the People; foreign journalists who write stories discreditable to the president's government are still expelled; the president's son is director of national security (or the president's "hit man"); and Hillela, the supposed savior of oppressed peoples, becomes involved in preserving and decorating the imperial palace. The hollowness of this liberation is a mirror of Hillela's own hollowness.

Then suddenly, after a quick summary of what happened to all the supporting players in Hillela's life story during the intervening years, the novel jumps to the proclamation ceremony for "the new African state that used to be South Africa," a ceremony that Reuel (as chairman of the Organization of African Unity) and Hillela attend. As might be expected, the narrator focuses all attention on Hillela—even though she has no connection with this fairy tale transformation of the South African state. (It seems that the blacks have liberated themselves.) She is rapt as "cannons ejaculate from the Castle"; for they are raising "the flag of Whaila's country." This moment toward which Hillela's life has always been moving has significance for her only in terms of her martyred husband, not in terms of those it will emancipate in the present.

"ONE IS NEVER talking to oneself," observes Rosa Burger in *Burger's Daughter*, "always one is addressed to someone." At the end of *A Sport of Nature*, the narrator offers an answer to Rosa that is a way of justifying a disregard for history:

> If it is true that the voice of a life is always addressing someone—for the religiously devout it is a god, for the politically devout it is the human mass—there is a stage in middle life, if that life is fully engaged with

"Makes Pasternak's *Zhivago* seem like an understatement."*



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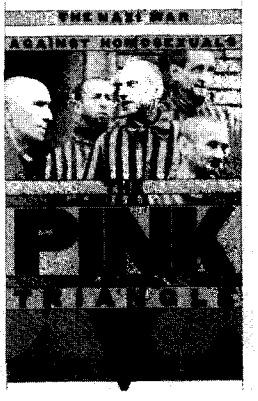

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the world and the present, when there is no space or need for reflection.

Hillela has no guilt, no doubts; she does not feel compelled to address the human mass because South Africa is not her country; nor, ultimately, is this story (in any real sense) her life. She has not developed, she has merely existed, unburdened by the past and hopelessly complacent about the future. She takes at face value—and if the promotional material is any indication, so will many readers—the fiction that while yesterday South Africa was awash in blood, tomorrow all might be magically healed.

Like the encyclopedias that Hillela peddles at one point in her "career," Gordimer's narrative is a "fraudulent offer of encapsulated knowledge," a fictional history that ends in the best of all possible worlds. Political reform in South Africa is a series of quick fixes, Gordimer intimates, and the cycle is bound to continue. Hillela's daughter by Whaila, named after Nelson Mandela's wife and referred to as "the namesake" (although Hillela knows hardly anything about Mandela), becomes a model, and the description of her worldview seems a perfect summing up of the cynicism the new novel both castigates and imitates: "An international model does not hamper her image with national politics; to the rich people who buy the clothes she displays or the luxuries her face and body promote, she is a symbol of Africa, anyway . . . ." Hillela is happy to have merely "reproduced herself." Nevertheless, the white mother and her black daughter become an "icon of liberation and reconciliation between the Third World and the Western World." A far cry (although equally bleak) from *Burger's Daughter*, which ends, as it began, at the prison door, with Rosa in jail like her father.

JENNIFER KRAUSS

MISS MORALS

Jane Austen
by Tony Tanner

(Harvard University Press, 291 pp., $20, $8.95 paper)

Tony Tanner's study of Jane Austen began 20 years ago, with introductions to the Penguin editions of *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Mansfield Park*. To make this book, he added a historical chapter on Austen and her age, along with separate chapters on all her other novels, including the unfinished *Sanditon*. No single theme emerges from these discussions, apart, perhaps, from the general sense that Austen was a critic of capitalist development and modernization. But simply as a series of views the book does well. The lapses into jargon ("our inescapable linguicity"; "the putative reader is ironized") and the interludes of coat-trailing ("Jane Austen never does actually *show* a good mother. I think we must infer from this what we choose") are so rare as to seem less than halfhearted, and one can read for pages at a stretch with the pleasant sense of overhearing a reader talking to other readers.

In short, this is the sort of intelligent study of a single author's oeuvre that has become uncommon in recent criticism. It is genuinely introductory as well as genuinely searching. It quotes at sufficient length to make all its findings available to anyone with familiar memories of the novels. Probably the best way to use it, however, is as a pretext for rereading one of them. I chose *Persuasion*—not because it is the wittiest (that would be *Pride and Prejudice*), or the boldest in design (*Mansfield Park*), but because, even with its happy ending, it carries the deepest feeling for life's accidents and defeats. It seems to be Tanner's favorite, too, if one may judge by how often he makes the earlier books look forward to it.

All of Austen's stories adapt a version of the "marriage plot," which was a staple of the popular fiction of her time. In this plot a young woman, already respectable but not yet thoroughly tested, is shown at the period of transition when she first aims to become a member of a community. In order to succeed, she has to select an appropriate match from a group of eligible, but possibly devious or false, candidates. Normally she can choose someone a little above her station in life, though it is permissible to go a good deal higher, as *Mansfield Park* shows, provided there is a family connection.

Austen brought nothing new to the dramatic elements of such a story. Rather, she commands respect for her omissions. She tolerated none of the standard narrative interlardings of fiction, in which, by a surplus of clinging sympathy or shared distress, an author may announce that the heroine is a stand-in for herself. Scenes of romantic interest, or of a "growing attachment," are not worked hard for the reader's sake. As for the climaxes, whether of rejoicing or of despair, they are limited by a precise motive in the design of the story. Her audience is stinted, in principle, of every extracurricular satisfaction, while it starts to share something of the author's self-respect. Austen's reward has come in the form of her reputation itself, a rare instance in literature of a fame that is elite without being esoteric.

Technically, Austen was inventive in one respect. She narrated a character's state of mind not only to set the scene for dramatic conflict, but to give a keener edge to recognitions that were to remain altogether inward. Her extension of the decorum of such "free indirect discourse" may be felt in a moment like the following from *Persuasion*. The heroine, Anne Elliot, has just been helped into a carriage by Captain Wentworth, the man she nearly married some years earlier:

> Yes,—he had done it. She was in the carriage, and felt that he had placed her there, that his will and his hands had done it, that she owed it to his perception of her fatigue, and his resolution to give her rest. . . . It was a remainder of a former sentiment; it was an impulse of pure, though unacknowledged friendship; it was a proof of his warm and amiable heart, which she could not contemplate without emotions so compounded of pleasure and pain, that she knew not which prevailed.

This is a mode of storytelling that George Eliot would never get far with unless there were a moral end in view, and that Dickens (a great cartoonist, who worked from the outside) hardly explored at all. One does not think of Austen as a psychologist. Still, in a passage like this one, she is doing the work of moral psychology; and among novelists she has no successor until Henry James.

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One feels the pressure of a small revelation in every paragraph Austen wrote. She managed it somehow without promising the sudden break of a contest or a catastrophe. This may seem just a circular way of recalling that she was a comic writer after all. But it has much to do, also, with the kind of moralist she was. She wrote confidently from the strength of an established community, and her data belonged to the experience of a society at rest. Alasdair MacIntyre has called her "the last great effective imaginative voice of the tradition of thought about, and practice of, the virtues." But the language of the communities in Austen's books is a language of obligations rather than virtues, of the slightly shifting allegiances or affections that have to do the work of moral action. It is understood by Austen, as by her readers, that the old virtues exist only with the operation of fixed roles in society, which can no longer be found even in communities of the smallest scale.

A virtuous character like Mr. Knightley, in *Emma*, may show a propriety in his sense of obligations that fits him like an unshakable habit, as if it had become second nature to him. But the heroines who seem closest to Austen herself—Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, Anne Elliot in *Persuasion*—learn from, and are modified by, their own actions, in a manner foreign to the character of a chivalric gentleman like Knightley. There is every suggestion (if we like to play that game) that they will continue to do so after the ends of the novels. Of Anne, Austen tells us that "she had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older." By the end she has chosen to become a sailor's wife—"that profession which is, if possible, more distinguished in its domestic virtues than in its national importance." Thus she has found a calling that is new to her, as it is to the nation. But she carries it off by persuading her negligent father, and her trusted worldly friend Lady Russell, of the good of such a marriage and such a calling. Even when she reflects on her duty to an older woman such as Lady Russell, she counts it a matter of deference to friendship, and not to an established order of valuations. From the emphasis that Austen gives to these details, it would seem she was conscious of "the tradition of virtues" as a thing of the past. The bonds of her society hold none the less securely for that.

Austen's distrust of sensibility, like her admiration for prudence, may be less thoroughgoing than it has usually been reckoned. Tanner writes well of this ambivalence when, in describing *Sense and Sensibility*, he comes to the novel's leading contrast between Elinor (sense) and Marianne (sensibility):

> It is one of Jane Austen's deft touches that Elinor should be very good at screen-painting, for she it is who is constantly trying to smooth and harmonize potentially abrasive and discordant occasions, giving the raw social realities a veneer of art. It is also an example of the complexity of Jane Austen's vision that, when Elinor's painted screens are being so cruelly insulted by the unspeakable snob Mrs. Ferrars, Marianne refuses to "screen" her personal outrage and anger and expresses her contempt for such malicious manners. We cannot fail to sympathize with her outburst if not positively applaud it, which means that Jane Austen has brought us to the point of feeling some positive approbation and appreciation for both the maintainer of screens and the discarder of screens.

Much the same can be said of the appreciation she makes us share both for the upholder and the questioner of a reliable prejudice that has not yet been tested.

MANSFIELD PARK appears to be an exception to Austen's liberal-mindedness. There, all the cleverness and all the readiness for innovation are assigned to the Crawfords—interlopers who have no use for the traditions of a country seat, and whose restless mobility is associated with a power to corrupt. By contrast, the novel's creep-mouse heroine, Fanny Price, is an exemplar of virtue uninformed by wit. Her judgment (in which intelligence plays no part) comes from an undeviating acceptance of conventional social sense. In the end, she wins her man, Edmund Bertram, and her success is made a rebuke to the fashionable Crawfords. The real mark of Fanny's virtue has been her refusal to participate in the "theatricals" the Crawfords have launched: the rehearsal and performance of a romantic melodrama, with friends cast in suggestive roles—this society's version of the blind-drunk bash while the parents are away.

Yet it is remarkable that Fanny is saved from joining the frolic only by the unexpected return to Mansfield Park of its proper guardian, Sir Thomas Bertram. This is the only case in any of Austen's books in which she employed a deus ex machina; and, as Tanner would say, we can infer from this what we choose. He thinks the novel is about the absence or abdication of society's proper guardians, and says acute things about the several characters who might have served that function. But *Mansfield Park* does also seem to ask a question that it cannot answer, about our ability to sympathize with the *unconscious* virtue that fits a character to enter the class of guardians.

THIS QUESTION bears on the story Tanner offers to explain Austen's development. Austen herself called *Mansfield Park* a novel about "ordination." She was referring to Edmund Bertram's taking of orders in the church, but Tanner hears resonances of a more general ordering principle in society. *Ordination* certainly brings to mind the phrase, common to 18th-century moralists such as Johnson and Burke, concerning "the just subordination of ranks in society": that is, the dependence of any social order on a recognition of hierarchy. Now as Tanner reads Austen's career, it exhibits from one book to the next a weakening sense of the legitimacy of subordination in the life she describes. Weakening, he means, in the characters but also in the author who created them; and in that respect, he suggests, Austen was a representative observer of her age.

Thus in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) Austen's command of a shared morality is complete. The mistake of the characters here, as Tanner remarks in a witty aside, is that they think at first the book about them will be called *Dignity and Perception*. Austen and her readers know better; and the characters gradually arrive at the same state of knowledge. Yet by the time Austen comes to write *Persuasion* (1818), "What is striking . . . is the absence of any real center or principle of authority." Rank, connections, the names of families, have become "truly arbitrary signifiers," and the only vitality anywhere is offered by new classes of people on the move: specifically by that floating society, the navy. On land, the society Austen can just see starting up will occupy most of the finished chapters of *Sanditon*. Its quality is defined, for her, by the makeshift citizens of a resort town, who follow an unembarrassable ethic of commercial development. Still, even in *Sanditon*, Austen pictures her heroine as belonging to an older, quieter, better way of life; she is, accordingly, the sort of

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young woman who can judge her new acquaintances in a phrase: "Activity run mad." That she is able to estimate them so coolly may be a more important fact than Tanner makes it appear.

An advantage of this view of Austen's career is that it allows Tanner to honor her as a social critic. It also leads him, at times, into a curious mood of anti-modern nostalgia, which he can neither quite admit as his own nor convincingly impute to the novels. I detect something of this tone, for example, when he accuses Mr. Parker in *Sanditon* of having "a permanently centrifugal and scattering self," with "no real anchoring function, no unseverable tie with reality." In dealing with *Persuasion*, where Austen is said still partly to approve of the coming changes, Tanner engages in misreadings of a plainer sort. He quotes a sentence that begins, "The Musgroves, like their house, were in a state of alteration, perhaps of improvement," and comments that the phrasing conceals "no biting irony, no malice. Jane Austen is genuinely open and uncommitted." It is true that the disarray of their house is genial enough; but, to any reader of Austen, an irony will already be audible with the words, "The Musgroves, *like their house* . . . ." Besides, as Tanner points out in another connection, "improvement" would hardly enter Austen's ear without some echo of "improvers," the landscape gardeners who remodeled the estates of the newly rich in the latest picturesque styles. Her use of the word is always apt to have an undertone of contempt.

BUT THESE remain matters of detail. The larger trouble with Tanner's account is that it shows Austen's progress from *Mansfield Park* to *Persuasion* to *Sanditon* as a movement from a reactive Toryism like Southey's to an acquiescent Whig optimism to a revulsion from capitalism and "the new money" as advanced as William Morris's a half century later. This distance Austen is supposed to have covered in about five years. Tanner's motive, I believe, in presenting her work in this way is a wish to praise her as something more than a literary artist. There is nothing wrong with that, and nothing inappropriate to Austen. She had, in fact, a carefully modest regard for merely literary fame. It is revealing that when Anne Elliot seeks to convert a minor naval personage, Captain Benwick, from his habits of morbid self-regard to a life of some utility, she tells him to lighten his reading of poetry and take up books of moral philosophy instead. His poets are named—Scott and Byron—and they are offered as almost interchangeable. On the other hand, the works of morality that Anne Elliot recommends are presumed to be familiar enough to go unnamed. They are simply such works as are "calculated to rouse and fortify the mind by the highest precepts, and the strongest examples of moral and religious endurances."

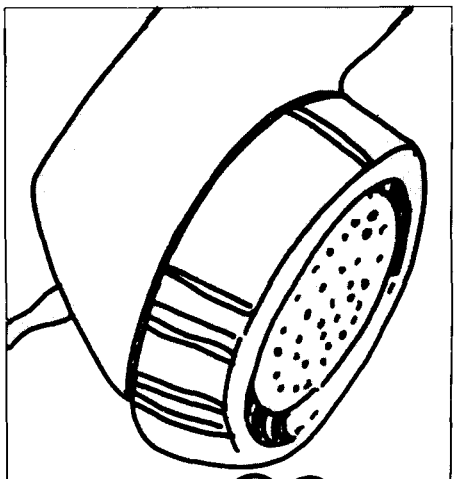
Austen's own novels are among the few works of literature one might conceivably add to such a list. But she is a novelist, not a philosopher. She aims to dramatize the character of obligations (both weak and strong), rather than teach a way of recognizing true virtue. She does, of course, respect the old virtues. She is likewise inquisitive about the possibility that there may be new ones. This has nothing to do with "improvement" and everything to do with the change that always happens in the passage of life from parents to children. She wrote of that change, tellingly, in *Sanditon*, to explain why the steady Heywoods would allow their daughter to visit the active and improving Parkers. Theirs, she says, was a more settled life:

> What prudence had at first enjoined, was now rendered pleasant by habit. They never left home, and they had a gratification in saying so.—But very far from wishing their children to do the same, they were glad to promote *their* getting out into the world, as much as possible. They stayed at home, that their children *might* get out.

Austen, in all of her writing, seems to have agreed with the parents that it was a good thing for the children to get out. This is less dramatic than Tanner's conclusion that, by her last books, "Established society and domesticity are now, as we say, 'all at sea' "; or that, in the world that has passed by the Heywoods, "Everything is changing continually. Changing and yet repeating. Going round in circles." Austen did see the new developments, and she measured the loss they entailed. But she did not nostalgically deplore their effects, any more than she radically questioned the means by which they were accomplished. The reason she tempts us to think she could have done both is that she knew the cost of everything.

DAVID BROMWICH

David Bromwich is the author of *Hazlitt: The Mind of a Critic* (Oxford University Press).



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A STAR IS BORN

Vanna Speaks
by Vanna White

(Warner Books, 191 pp., $15.95)

When I first saw the title of this book, I thought Larry Speakes had gotten married. Then I realized it was her again . . . famous person as mystery guest. No one has the faintest idea why this woman is so well known, yet everyone knows her name. It is therefore a fair question to ask, Who *is* Vanna White, and why is she saying anything at all?

The stock answer is that she is the designated hostess of a television show called "Wheel of Fortune," offering her life story because, presumably, millions of her fans are interested. The real answer is that Vanna White is the pinup girl of the lumpen proletariat, and this rambling collection of you-name-it is an odd and strangely honest reply to fan mail.

The jacket copy burbles the thrust of the book. *"As a child, Vanna wanted to be a star. Now she gives you the story of her meteoric rise to the top."* Well, maybe to the middle. Her job is, after all, turning letters on a board and pointing to prizes. *"Here's Vanna sharing her life, her loves, her fashion secrets, her exercises . . . . "* Her crocheting instructions. "MESH: Row 1: Skip first 3 dc, 1 dc in next dc, * ch 2, skip 2 dc, 1 dc in next dc, repeat from * across . . . ." For me, this was pearls before swine, since I do not know what a dc is.

The most astounding thing about the book is that it is an alternate selection of the Literary Guild. I say this because there is nothing literary about it, and I'm not sure it's a book. Alas, the lady turns letters for a living, not phrases. The evidence comes as early as the acknowledgments, where she thanks "the city of North Myrtle Beach," her "best friend in the whole world," and someone named Bart Andrews who apparently started as her ghostwriter, then withdrew. Way to go, Bart.

The title, *Vanna Speaks*, refers to the fact that she is, professionally, silent. White explains, "My publisher pointed out to me that I was a woman of mystery because I don't talk on the show." This probably misrepresents mystery, but what the hell. There are 73 photographs of the author, who has the capacity to look markedly different depending on the angle. She can alternately look like the girl next door, Faye Dunaway, Judy Holliday, or Sea Biscuit.

It is clear early on that this is not autobiography as we know it. "The first thing I do once I'm out of bed is about five minutes of stretching." After describing these exercises she writes, "Next I brush my teeth." We're talking folksy here. And if I can't imagine who this book is for (and I can't), Vanna can. It is apparently for the reader who can use suggestions: "If you know that you'll be having a big dinner, eat a lighter lunch. . . ." The author reveals that she uses vinegar on the bathroom chrome and cleans jewelry with toothpaste. Before I could squeeze some Crest onto my wedding ring I discovered that "watering your houseplants with water you've hard-boiled eggs in gives them extra nutrients, especially calcium." (*Sic sic sic* and fie on the ghostwriter she did keep.)

For the purposes of autobiography, White is at a disadvantage, having neither achieved a consequential goal nor commanded a ringside seat for someone who has. What she is left with is her luck, if you can call it that, which led to her accidental—and inexplicable—fame. "I suppose that next to turning letters, I'm most famous for the clothes I wear on the show." "The main subject of my mail has been my hair." These are not good reasons for writing a book.

The author's personal history does not put one in mind of a game show, but rather that other daytime genre, the soap opera. Hers is an ordinary, kind of sad, undistinguished resumé—which would be quite wonderful had she gone on to discover interferon, but she didn't. Her mother is the focal figure in her life, and the author chooses unusual mother anecdotes. An example: "She worked as a carhop, and once brought an order to a man, only to discover that he was exposing himself to her. Without a second's thought, she gave him exactly what she thought he deserved—a naked lap full of scalding hot coffee." The author's plucky mother and her father, who was Puerto Rican, divorced when she was a young child. Her mother then married Herbert White, and they had a son, Vanna's half brother, Chip—"as in chip off the old block."

White recalls that she was "absolutely boy crazy" in North Myrtle Beach, and that, as a kid, she had no real worries. "In fact, for my new friend Judy Joiner and me our most pressing concern was our still flat chests. We each sent away for the Mark Eden bust developer and did our 'exercises' every night, all the while praying they would work." They worked.

There are more childhood recollections: thinking her brother, Chip, has been eaten by "Bill," the neighborhood alligator, only to find him asleep in a parked car. (Chip, not Bill.) We accompany her as she goes on the pill and is deflowered by Cary Stoffel; sees the ghost of her grandmother; gets a Volkswagen. She is appointed a high school cheerleader, which turns out to be a lucky break: "Being a cheerleader taught me the tools of my trade: how to smile and how to point." White then goes to modeling school in Atlanta where she keeps running into "this gorgeous man" in the disco clubs. Gordy Watson was 15 years older, divorced, with three children. She moved in. She also repeatedly entered the Sun Fun Festival beauty pageant, "but—as always, it seemed—I came in second runner-up." Instead of continuing school, she started modeling in Atlanta. "And even though I weighed only ten or 15 pounds more than I do now, it seemed that it all settled in my bust."

We learn of her being fourth runner-up in another beauty contest and of trouble with Gordy; when she told him she thought her future was in Los Angeles, he took back all the gifts he'd given her. "He hid everything . . . and told me that I could have them back if I married him." (Gordy, it seems, presaging Vanna's ride on the "Wheel of Fortune," was playing his own version of "Let's Make a Deal.")

Other bits of information are strewn about. Her Momma and Daddy (White) parted. She occasionally did pot and cocaine with a bad-ass neighbor in L.A. She ate compulsively as a response to career rejection. Her live-in boyfriend (male centerfold, soap opera actor, and male stripper John Gibson) died tragically in a rented plane he was piloting.

In addition to resembling a country-and-western song, the book affords an opportunity to settle scores. White lets us know she was "crushed" when, some years ago, John Travolta didn't respond

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to her fan letter. She accuses *People* magazine of treachery in reporting a story. "They made me sound like a total airhead," she complained. (Don't know how *that* happened.) And there is the episode with *Playboy*. It seems that as a younger model, the author posed for what she calls "lingerie ads." This may be a judgment call. Those photographs certainly were not for the Spiegel catalog. In a few pictures the lingerie forgets to cross the t. or cover the a. Mr. Hefner reportedly promised her the pictures would not run, but reneged.

"Wheel of Fortune" engaged White's services in 1982. The host, Pat Sajak, does all the talking. That the "hostess" points and turns letters may be a pre-feminist paradigm—pleasing to some—with Vanna a caricature of how it used to be before the bra burners took charge and turned their men into Alan Alda. Her "Wheel" appeal could also have something to do with nostalgic affection for assembly line work, as opposed to robotics. Vanna may be Rosie the Riveter with a studio audience.

Although she describes herself as a letter turner, I think she is really a clapper. She claps no matter what—when the contestants win, lose, or simply prepare to play. (Of course I had to watch the show to get this information. In the process I suffered the comeuppance of not being able to solve the puzzle phrases until almost all the letters were in place. It is no surprise, therefore, that I felt empathy for the contestant who guessed one phrase as "more fun than a barrel of Vikings.")

The acquisitive nature of "Wheel" is a given. It is understandable that people who thrill to freezers, boats, and vacations would relate not to, say, Doris Lessing as their "hostess," but to a sweet and pretty woman who points out the prizes with proper appreciation. Obviously part of the reason that 43 million viewers love Vanna is that she is discernibly one of them. White is not camping, as perhaps some would wish; there is no implied wink as she points, turns, and claps. Her celebrity honors the mediocre of the world. Her book is a hymn to the ordinary. The hotel of her self-esteem can only be half-booked, however, because her "success" is not only accidental, but incomprehensible—not only to me, but to her.

MARGO HOWARD

Margo Howard is a writer and critic.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

duced, the carpenters and bus drivers who bought the houses and cars. If they are now earning five dollars an hour assembling computer boards or serving hamburgers, who will make up the difference for the American economy? How will their children afford higher education that is ever more essential, especially for the kinds of jobs TRB has in mind for them? Even with families working more hours, they earned 11 percent less in real dollars in 1984 than in 1967.

American labor does not want an end to trade, and the foreign jobs dependent on it. What American labor wants is an end to *unfair* trade that puts us at a disadvantage, while often exploiting foreign workers to gain that advantage.

RITA FREEDMAN
Social Democrats, USA
Washington, D.C.

THE PRICE OF AGING

To the editors:

Phillip Longman mentioned that under the new Bowen Plan, which would provide extended Medicare coverage in case of catastrophic illness, the entire cost of doctor bills to the elderly participant would be $4.92 a month ("Deathbed Politics," March 30). He does not express clearly that $4.92 would be just the cost of additional coverage, in addition to the regular expense of medical coverage, which is $17.90 a month.

It is true that in isolated cases younger and middle-aged people develop some serious illnesses, and that some older people stay healthy for a long time, but that is the exception. As a rule, old age and ailments go hand in hand. I would be glad to forget all the government-sponsored medical funds if I could return to the condition I was in 25 years ago. The golden age is not all glittering, and I miss in Longman's article a single word of understanding in this respect. But the author will find this out for himself when he arrives at my age.

RUDOLPH DAVID
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

POWER VOTE

To the editors:

Although it is true that Washingtonians do not have "even one vote on Capitol Hill," it is incorrect to state that they are "underrepresented in the Electoral College" (Washington Diarist, "Bureaucrats' Lament," April 20). In fact, the District of Columbia elects 0.56 percent of the Electoral College but contains only 0.28 percent of the U.S. population (1980 census). Therefore, a Washington voter wields twice as much power in a presidential election as the average U.S. voter.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Smothered Shots

A FEW WEEKS AGO in Hollywood, Florida, I learned the secret of life: move your right hand under the shaft of the club by about three-quarters of an inch, shift your thumb a quarter-inch to the left, and apply more pressure with your index finger. The slice and the smothered shots are gone, and the golf ball soars in a perfect parabola down the fairway. Not every time, but pretty consistently. Now, understand that this is what works for me. For you, hey . . . I'm not going to lay my system of values on another person. Whatever works for you is fine—interlocking, baseball, Vardon overlap, any grip you want.

I USED TO BE a secret golfer, almost the only person my age I knew who played golf. I took some solace in the fact that John Updike was a serious duffer. And Michael Murphy, the founder of Esalen, wrote a paean to the game 15 years ago called *Golf in the Kingdom*, which is still the essential aesthetic work on the subject: "The golf ball . . . is an icon of Man the Multiple Amphibian, a smaller waffled version of the crystal ball, a mirror for the inner body; it is a lodestone, an old stone to polarize your psyche with." And so on. Still, I was furtive; I would sneak out to the public course, pick up a game with some retired gent who was good company, and rush back to work. No more. Golf has come out of the closet in the Age of Reagan. Yuppies play, unashamed, with kangaroo-hide bags and graphite-shafted clubs. Even the French magazine *Elle*, avant-garde taste-maker, recently devoted a number of pages to golf, including a spread on golf trinkets, such as a radio shaped like a large golf ball, a teapot shaped like a larger golf ball, and official tees from the Old Course at St. Andrews (available at Golf Plus, 212 boulevard Pereire, Paris 17).

THERE IS NOTHING more boring to the non-golfer than the golfer's recitation of his round: "I was in this cubby lie in the rough, so I took out a seven iron, hooded the club, and . . ." Golfers continually impose these tales on the innocent, but lately, I've noticed, the main topic of conversation among golfophiles is where they've played. The usual impressive names include Pine Valley in New Jersey, Winged Foot in Westchester, Pebble Beach in Monterey, and The National on Long Island. But new courses are coming into vogue, including The Boulders in the desert of Arizona, which features big rocks in the rough, and a course I recently played in Florida called Eagle Trace, where greens are islands. Murphy writes that "a round of golf partakes of the journey." But more and more, the main journey is getting to the course. Then there's the journey around the course in one of those obnoxious little carts.

GOLF IS ON my mind too much. I replay rounds in my head to get to sleep (I usually get to my tee shot on the fourth, a daunting par five, before conking out). My doodles are architectural renderings of golf holes, normally doglegs to the left to accommodate my new hook. And I am always thinking about terrain that would be great for a golf course. I like the idea of using the Reflecting Pool between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial as a water hazard. You could set up parallel par fours going out and back with the water on the right one way and on the left the other. A bad slice, however, might end up bouncing off the black marble of the Vietnam Memorial, which would be undecorous. I work on Capitol Hill, and I've often thought that the grounds around the Capitol would be perfect for a nine-hole layout, with maybe five or six par threes and a few short par fours, including one using the Supreme Court as out of bounds. Congressmen could play between quorum calls, using pages as caddies and driving around on subway cars liberated from the tracks that run between the Rayburn Building and the Capitol.

TO MANY PEOPLE—including large numbers of constituents—golf still connotes money, flabbiness, and time-wasting. The newspaper I publish, *Roll Call*, which has Congress as its subject and its audience, has started a feature in which members list their favorites in various areas. We've had William Cohen's ten favorite books (*Advise and Consent*, *The Killer Angels* . . .), John Rowland's ten favorite pizza toppings (pepperoni, Canadian bacon, black olives . . .), and Jesse Helms's ten favorite historical figures (Sam Ervin, Patrick Henry, the Apostle Paul . . .). But we can't find a congressman willing to list his ten favorite golf courses. Favorite jogging trails or football players? Fine. But golf is still in the closet on Capitol Hill.

NOT IN THE CLOSET on Capitol Hill is Laurence Tisch, CEO of CBS. He has been out defending the cuts he's imposed on the news division. I think Tisch is a smart, compassionate man. He has been surprised and hurt by the publicity that paints him as a greedy monster. The fact is that CBS News is a bloated operation. Tisch's problem is that he can't say this publicly, so he's reduced to mouthing platitudes about how CBS "will spend any amount of money whenever it is needed to maintain our standards of quality," etc., etc. Everyone knows that in real life financial decisions have to be made that might hurt quality. The question that faces managers is this: If I cut costs ten percent, quality will decline one percent. Are the cuts worth it? In almost every business, including TV news (which, face it, is not much more than show biz), they certainly are. That's what Tisch is doing—and should be doing.

IS IT WRONG TO FEEL sorry for Ivan Boesky? Probably. But I have to admit I do a little. The pictures of him at his arraignment were very sad, his face sunken, his head bowed—and he clearly wasn't putting on a show of despondency. The guy is crushed. So what? Well, I have to admit that there was something exhilarating about Ivan in the old days. He had so much hubris, was so outrageous that it was fun watching him, whispering behind his back. Almost everyone suspected that he was due for a fall. Could there be anyone more deserving? But now that it's happened, the thrill is gone, and Ivan, the guy who mocked the gods and pretended he was one, turns out to be horribly mortal.

SPEAKING OF IMMORTALS, did I tell you about the shot I hit on the 18th at Emerald Hills in Hollywood? A low screaming two-iron, bounced on the front of the green, and . . .

J. K. G.

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Issues of the Information Age:

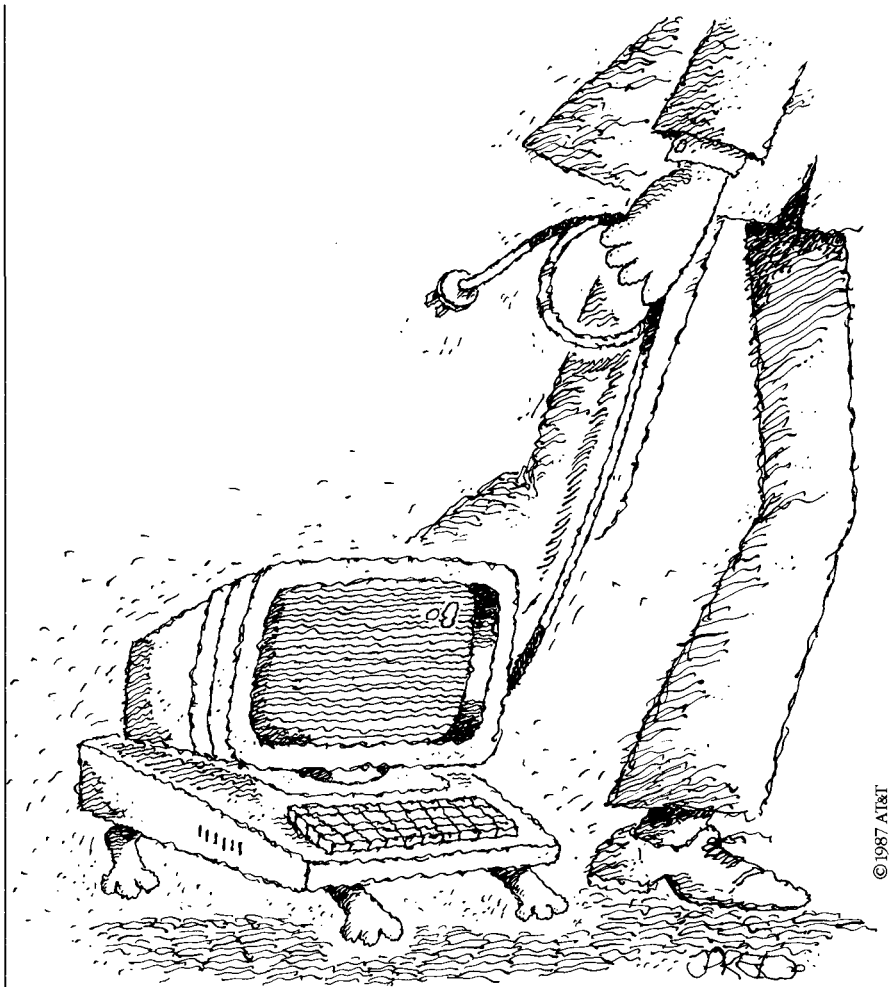
The paradox of power.

The Information Age, for all its potential, has brought with it a new kind of problem. Often, the machines that contribute so much to the flood of information do little to help most of us cope with it. They are difficult to use, rigid in their demands, almost arrogant in their inability to work with any but their own kind. They are the muscle-bound tools of specialists.

In our view, the problem is not that the machines are too powerful for the rest of us. They are not powerful enough.

This is the paradox of power: the more powerful the machine, the less power it exerts over the person using it. We define a more powerful machine as one that is more capable of bending to the will of humans, rather than having humans bend to its will. The definition is deeply ingrained in AT&T. The telephone is such a powerful device precisely because it demands so little of its user.

AT&T foresees the day when the Information Age will become universal. People everywhere will participate in a worldwide Telecommunity. They will be able to handle information in any form—conversation, data, images, text—as easily as they now make a phone call.



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That day is coming closer. One example: scientists at AT&T Bell Laboratories are developing "associative" memories for computers, further enabling the machines to work with incomplete, imprecise, or even contradictory information. That's perfectly natural for a human. What makes it a breakthrough is that these computers won't ask you to be anything else.

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De Beers

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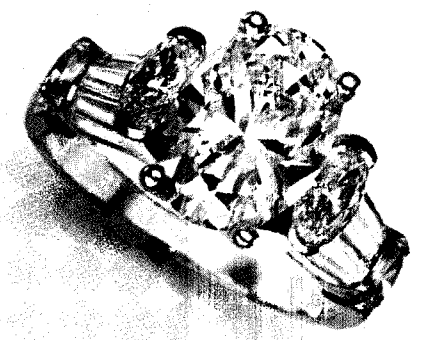
Each is a visible reflection of you. Unique in all the world, possessing four characteristics that set it apart forever. They are called the 4©'s: Cut, Color, Clarity and Carat-weight. These determine the value of a diamond—and to an astonishing degree, the beauty and value of your jewelry.

Your jeweler is the expert where diamonds are concerned. His knowledge can help make the acquisition of a quality diamond of a carat or more the beautiful, rewarding experience it should be.

A diamond is forever.



The ring shown features a quality diamond of 2 carats.

A CARAT OR MORE.
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